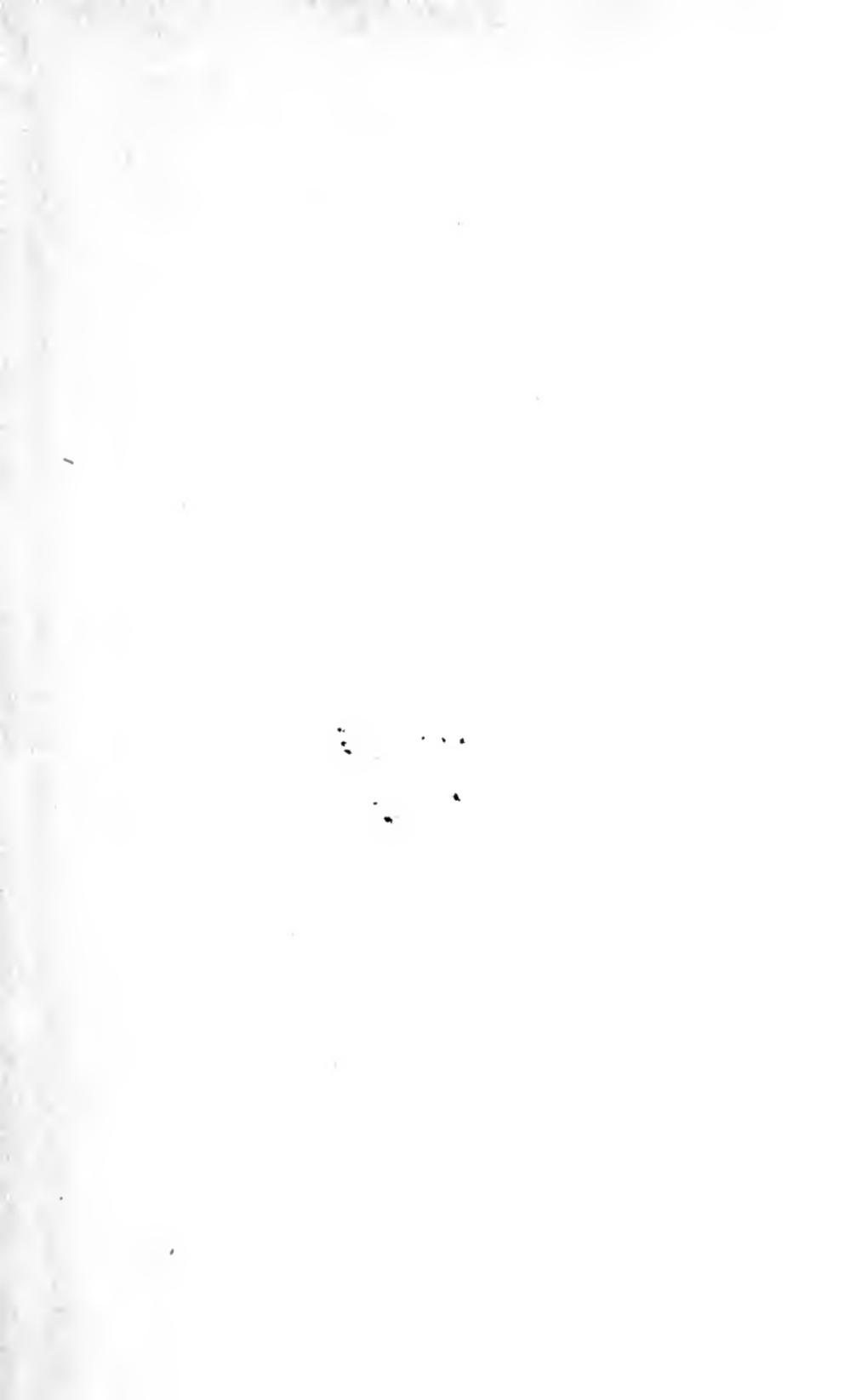


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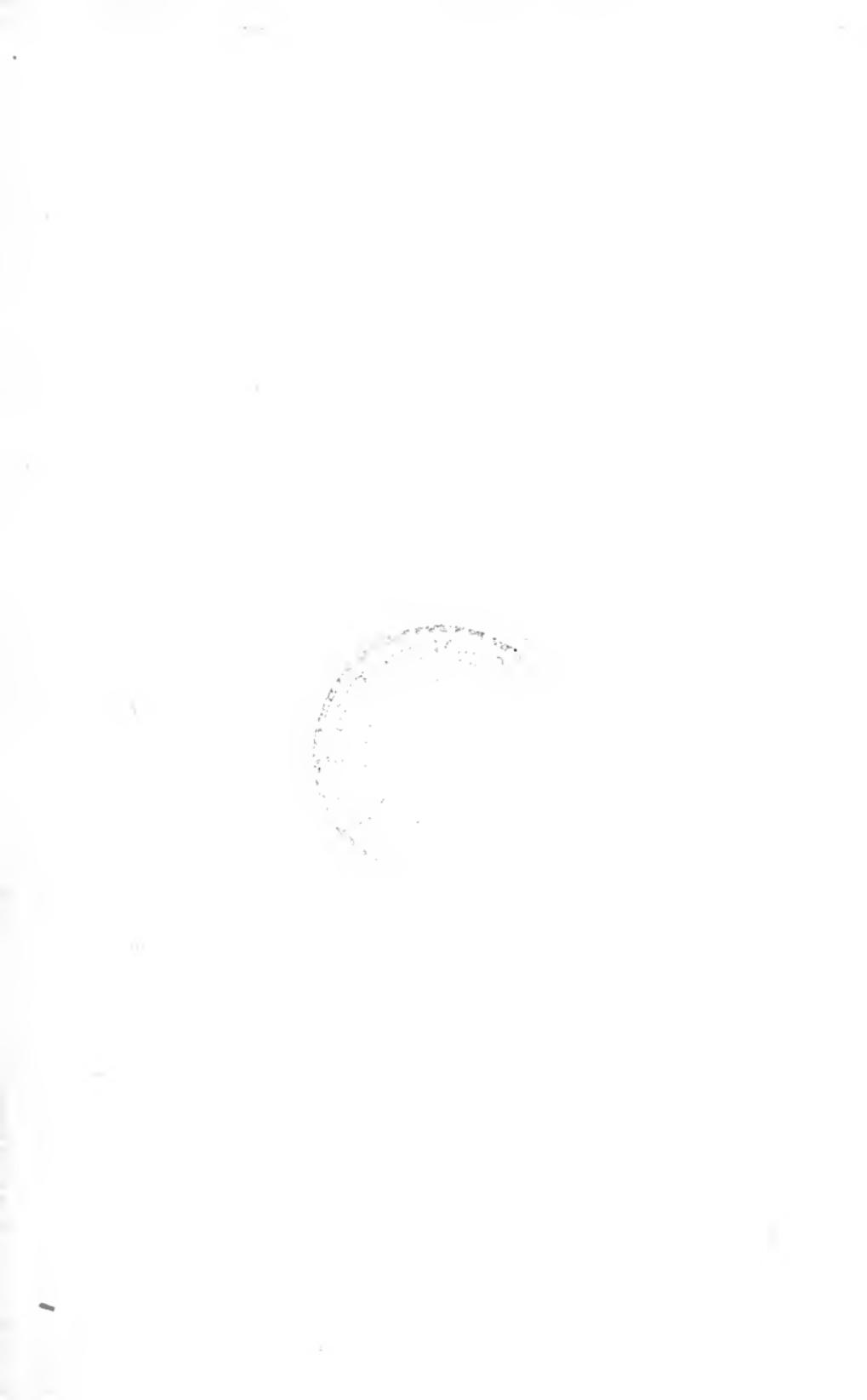


79

REVIEW ARTICLE



THE SACRED HEART



THE SACRED HEART

OR

Incidents Showing How Those who Honour the
Sacred Heart of Jesus are Assisted and
Helped by its Power and Love

TOGETHER WITH

*LIVES OF B. MARGARET MARY AND VEN.
P. DE LA COLOMBIÈRE*

Selected from the German

OF

REV. JOSEPH A. KELLER, D.D.

BY

THE TRANSLATOR OF 'ANGELI DEI,' 'CHRISTMAS LEGENDS,'
AND 'ST. JOSEPH'S HELP'

FOURTH EDITION

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HERBERTUS CARDINALIS VAUGHAN,

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PREFACE.

FROM the earliest ages of Christianity itself there have been sceptical spirits who have endeavoured to blind their eyes to the existence of a God; depraved intellects who have refused to admit what they cannot perceive; and the Psalmist has given this class of minds a fitting appellation when he called them ‘fools’; yet, as a matter of fact, the human race as a whole has acknowledged the existence of a God: this belief may have been weakened or distorted, but its very denial is a strong proof that the tradition of such an existence remained. Again, there have been others who have been forced from the rational law, which rules an intelligent being to acknowledge that ‘God is,’ but further they will not go; they let Him reign in heaven, but they will not admit, nor can they fathom, the tender care, the intense interest, He takes in every

individual soul ; they ignore, as it were, those attributes which bring him so near to our earth and to us, more especially that particular attribute of His Providence which forms the fundamental teaching of the Catechism, that 'God is everywhere,' the very foundation of the calm reliance and quiet confidence which the faithful have in simply turning to Him in all their needs, and in sending up their petitions for the Divine assistance.

But these are restless days, and such confidence and peaceful assurance in an unseen protection casts a reflection on these two species of modern thought, so ever ready to rail against anything like supernatural interference, or, as they put it, 'superstitious practices.' Yet not altogether modern, for is it not the very evil that Venerable Bede complains of in the Scribes and Pharisees (in his Homily for the Third Sunday of Lent), when he says that 'they denied facts when they could, and when they were not able twisted them by evil interpretation, asking for signs and wonders ; but when these were granted, explained them away by some natural cause'? Well might we exclaim with him, 'O thou who stubbornly deniest that which thine eye seeth, thine hand holdeth, and thy sense perceiveth, what wilt thou say to a sign from heaven ?'

And now I ask, how have these idealists been treated? God might, had he wished, have destroyed them in a forcible and striking manner, but He has preferred to use gentler means with such misguided souls, and in His own patient way tried to win them to Himself. He has come to the assistance of His Spouse, the Church, weighed down perhaps now more than ever by these intellectual theorists, and has, therefore, in our own day raised up powerful agencies to assist in the spread of the knowledge of His truth and His love. He has reiterated again and again His complaints of the ingratitude of His people, and by visible signs, both at home and abroad, He has repeatedly manifested the accomplishment of the promises He made to all those 'who should practise devotion to His Sacred Heart.'

Yes, the worshippers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus are still pleading with Peter amidst the turbulent waters, 'Lord, save us, or we perish,' and everywhere they are endeavouring by prayers and good works to develop that spirit of Faith and Union, so opposed to the now prevailing spirit of the world.

Peter has spoken again by the mouth of Leo XIII. 'Devote yourselves, dear children,' he says, 'with love and fervour in spreading the

Spirit of Jesus Christ ; do good without ostentation ; aid the poor, do not shrink from visiting them, and while devoting yourselves in relieving temporal wants, forget not to use your efforts for the consolation and salvation of souls. The poor and the working-classes are being seduced at this time by a spirit of turbulent discontent, men without true principles are agitating the world, terrible evils threaten society, never were so many temptations spread before us as now—temptations against the faith, against purity, against the love of the Catholic Church ; they abound at every step.' Is not this an echo of that complaint which was heard in the seventeenth century by Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque in the quiet sanctuary at Paray-le-Monial ?

It is therefore with the object of reanimating the confidence in the love and mercy of the Sacred Heart that we venture to offer to the public this collection of little stories gleaned from all parts of the world—instances of the interposition of Divine Providence taken from the most reliable sources, many of which have been granted within the last few years.

And as our Divine Lord promised His especial Benediction on all works undertaken in honour of His Sacred Heart, we trust that the propaga-

tion of this little book may repair and expiate in some measure the insults and wrongs that are daily committed against Him, moreover that His choicest blessings may fall upon those who read it, and are led by its means to a greater love of this Divine Heart.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREFACE	v

ORIGIN OF THE PUBLIC DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART.

1. Life of Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque	15
2. Life of Père Claude de la Colombière	36
3. The Bull <i>Auctorem Fidei</i>	45

II.

EXAMPLES AND SAYINGS OF THE SAINTS CONCERNING THIS DEVOTION.

1. The Spear and Nails of Our Lord Jesus Christ	51
2. St. Longinus and the Fathers of the Church	53
3. St. Angela of Foligno	57
4. St. Peter Damian	59
5. St. Mechtilde	60
6. The Venerable Thomas of Jesus	62
7. St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi	65
8. Père James Alvarez de Paz, S.J.	68
9. St. Francis of Sales	69
10. Pope Pius VIII.	71
11. A Jansenistic Mother led to the Sacred Heart	74
12. A Bride of the Sacred Heart	75

III.

COUNTRIES AND TOWNS DEDICATED TO THE SACRED
HEART.

	PAGE
1. A Page from Tyrolese History	81
2. The Town and Diocese of Amiens consecrated to the Sacred Heart	96
3. A Miracle wrought by the Sacred Heart at Mar- seilles	102
4. Ecuador consecrated to the Sacred Heart	104
5. Devotion to the Sacred Heart in China	105

IV.

THE SACRED HEART OUR REFUGE IN DISTRESS AND
TROUBLE.

1. Under the Protection of the Sacred Heart	108
2. A House in Danger saved through Prayer to the Sacred Heart	109
3. Saved from Imminent Peril	111
4. The Miraculous Power of the Scapular of the Sacred Heart	112
5. Two Lovers of the Sacred Heart rewarded	114
6. The Sacred Heart of Jesus a Wonder-working Physician	115
7. Two Instances of Confidence in the Sacred Heart rewarded	117
8. A Favour obtained on the Feast of the Sacred Heart in 1882	118
9. A Child in Great Danger watched over by the Sacred Heart	120
10. The Sacred Heart and the Savages	122
11. The Sacred Heart and the Cholera	123
12. A Mother's Ardent Desire fulfilled	127
13. How a Priest obtained a Happy Death	129
14. A Priest in Distress	130

	PAGE
15. Unexpected Help	131
16. Justice obtained through Prayer	132
17. On the Threshold of the Priesthood	133
18. Obstacles overcome	134
19. 'The Instruments are there'	136
20. 'In the Nick of Time'	137

V.

THE SACRED HEART THE RETREAT OF THE FALLEN.

1. 'Come to Me, all ye who labour and are heavily burdened'	139
2. A Triumph of the Sacred Heart in Dalmatia	140
3. The Sacred Heart among the Soldiers (an Adventure of our own Day)	145
4. A Quarrel terminated through the Sacred Heart	157
5. The Ruler of Hearts	159
6. A Mother's Trouble	161
7. The Burden of Sin	163
8. Converted at the Gate of a Monastery	164
9. Happy under the Yoke of the Sacred Heart	180

VI.

THE SPIRIT OF THE SACRED HEART BREATHES WHERE IT WILLETH.

1. Through the Heart of the Mother to that of the Son	183
2. Three Fruits of the Apostleship of Prayer	184
3. The Sacred Heart and an Unhappy Mother	185
4. A Diseased Foot cured by the Sacred Heart	187
5. A Bad Disposition cured	187
6. The All-powerful Physician	188
7. Saved from a Flood	190
8. Rescued from a Well by the Sacred Heart	191
9. 'Nil Desperandum'	193

	PAGE
10. A Priest in North America cured of Heart Disease	195
11. Innocence brought to Light	196
12. The Last Moments	197
13. A Parish in Distress	200
14. Persuaded at Last	202
15. An Aged Sinner	204
16. A Curious Bargain	205
17. Despondency cured	207
18. A Drunkard converted	208
19. A Mother Seriously Ill restored to Health	210
20. The Sacred Heart helps a Workman Spiritually and Temporally	212
21. How a Person was brought from Death to Life	213
22. The Fortunate Election of a Mayor	215
23. The Story of an Invalid Student and a Happy Death	216
24. A Death-bed Repentance	219
25. A Workman restored to Health	222
26. Poverty relieved	223
27. At the Last Moment	225
28. Three Little Proofs to show the Efficacy of the Sacred Heart	227
29. The Sacred Heart our Helper	232
30. Perseverance in a Vocation under Severe Trials	233
31. The Bell of the Sacred Heart	236
32. A Thanksgiving from Brazil	237
33. Work and Bread obtained	239
34. An Invalid's Offering	240
35. 'A Friend in Need is a Friend Indeed'	241
36. 'All's Well that ends Well'	243
37. A Victory over the Old Serpent	244
38. Family Happiness	245
39. Saint Joseph, Friend of the Sacred Heart	246
40. The Holy Sacraments, the Health of the Sick	247
41. The Tenth Promise fulfilled	248
42. A Widow and the Sacred Heart of Jesus	254

THE SACRED HEART

I.

ORIGIN OF THE PUBLIC DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART.

1. *Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque.*

DEVOTION to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has, in a very supernatural manner, ever abided in the Church. We may say it began on Calvary, for was it not on the Cross that the Divine Heart was pierced through and through, and there, for the first time, the extent of its true nature openly revealed to the Church? Was it not on Calvary that the seven-fold sword penetrated the heart of the Virgin-Mother of God? for the invisible wound of love which emanated from that opened side was impressed, never to be effaced, on the heart of the

Mother from that of the Son. Yes, assuredly Mary understood, better than angels and saints, the secrets of the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and, leaving Calvary when 'all was consummated,' how faithfully did she, with the Apostle of Love, carry on the teachings of that broken Heart in the solitude of Ephesus!

St. John had been the first to rest on that loving breast and hear the beatings of the Heart beneath, and all for sinful man. He had stood by the Cross at Mary's side and seen, with inexpressible grief, his Master's life-blood drawn from its deepest recesses by an enemy's lance. What he and the 'Mother of fair love' so dearly cherished they left as a precious legacy to the infant Church, and handed down the spirit of the Sacred Heart, which has been uninterruptedly perpetuated ever since; for the life of every saint has been impregnated, if we may so speak, with the Spirit of Love, which is the foundation and stay of Christianity itself. It was this spirit that made St. Bernard cry out: 'Oh, how good and how sweet it is to take up our abode in the Heart of Jesus! What a rich treasure is this Heart, and what a precious pearl! I would willingly give up all I have in order that I might possess it. In this Temple, in this Sanctuary, before this Ark of the Covenant, I will adore and praise the

Lord, saying : "I have found in the Heart of Jesus my King, my Brother, my Friend."

The Seraphic Doctor, St. Bonaventure, speaking of the Sacred Wounds of our Saviour, breaks out in these ardent expressions of love: 'O gracious stigmas, through you I have entered into the most hidden recesses of the love of Jesus ; here will I take up my abode. How lovely is the sweetness which the mind enjoys when it unites itself to the Heart of Jesus ! . . . The gate of heaven is now opened, the sword which guarded its entrance since the fall of our first parents has been sheathed, and the soldier's lance has opened for us the treasury of eternal wisdom and love.'

But the inexpressible sweetness which issues from the Sacred Heart of Jesus was, in a very special manner, discerned by St. Catharine of Sienna, and also by the two great Benedictine saints, Gertrude and Mechtilde.

St. Catharine, in one of those loving conferences which she used to share with her Divine Spouse, asked Him one day the reason of His permitting His side to be opened after His death. He gave her this reply : 'I wished to reveal to mankind the secrets of My Heart, that all might learn that My love is far greater than I have yet been able to manifest by My sufferings, for there was a limit even to the greatest sufferings which I

had to undergo, but there has never been a limit to the love which made Me suffer. Dearly beloved daughter, know that the pains of My body could in no way be compared with those of My soul.' This did our loving Jesus confide to one of His favourite servants.

But in a still more privileged manner was the wondrous St. Gertrude favoured with the familiar caresses of her Heavenly Spouse ; her whole body seemed to be inflamed with the love of this Adorable Heart, and a most tender sympathy ever existed between them. One of the most memorable passages of her writings puts before us her devotion to the Sacred Heart in its brightest light. 'Among all the manifold graces,' she exclaims, 'which Thou didst bestow on me, O sweet Jesus, is that inestimable mark of Thy friendship and familiarity with which at different times Thou art pleased to present me—Thy most Sacred Heart, that chief source of all my delights, at one time giving me Thy Heart as a free gift, and at another exchanging Thy Heart for mine. Through this intercourse with Thy most tender Heart, Thou hast revealed to me Its hidden secrets, and hast bestowed on me those pure raptures of love in the wonderful caresses which have so often touched my heart ; therefore I give Thee back, my Lord and my God, what-

ever belongs to Thee, and through this Divine Heart all that adoration which is due to Thee from all creatures.'

But full of love as these saints were, and so intimately dear to the Heart of Jesus, yet it was not intended that they should be the heralds of this Devotion; nor were they ignorant of the designs of that Heart which they understood so well, for St. Gertrude tells us that 'Our Lord had reserved this Devotion for later centuries, as a last exertion of His Love to win souls to Himself.'

It was the seventeenth century which was destined by God to pour out upon the world those 'fountains of living waters' which He had Himself invited all to come and drink—a century of coldness, lawlessness and pride, a century in which it seemed the least likely that any softening influence could take effect. But *contra agere* has ever seemed our dearest Lord's ways of dealing with His perverse creatures, and for the accomplishment of His designs He again chose, as in the foundation of His Church, a weak instrument to confound the strong,

The life of Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque is now too well known amongst the faithful to need repeating at any great length here. The young girl who entered religion at the age of twenty-

three did so with the full purpose of becoming a saint for the love of God. She placed herself, as she was bidden to do by her novice-mistress, 'before God as a blank canvas before a painter,' and thus, laying no obstacles in the way her Divine Spouse wished to lead her, she became a fitting instrument for the great work that lay before her.

It was about a year after her profession—in the year 1673—as she was kneeling one day before the Blessed Sacrament, absorbed with the feeling of the presence of God, and lost in an ecstasy of love, that she beheld for the first time with the eyes of her soul the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, encircled by a crown of thorns and a cross above it. It was then that He discovered to her the secrets of His will with regard to the mission that He meant to impose upon her.

Speaking to her during this first vision, Jesus said to her :

' My Divine Heart is so full of love for men, and especially for you, that, unable any longer to keep within Itself the flames of Its burning love, It needs must spread them abroad through means of you, and It must make Itself known unto men in order to enrich them with the treasures which It contains. I make known to you the worth of these treasures : they contain the graces of sancti-

fication and of salvation, which are needful to free them from the abyss of perdition. I have chosen you, who are an abyss of unworthiness and ignorance, to carry out this great work, so that it may be seen that everything has been done by Me alone.'

After this wonderful favour, Margaret Mary experienced such a vehement pain in her side that the agony prevented her sleeping in the night, and this pain always increased on the first Friday of every month.

In a second vision in which our Lord appeared to her, during the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, He complained to her of the ingratitude of men in return for His love.

'This ingratitude,' He said, 'wounded Me more than all else that I endured during My Passion. Yet all that I have endured for them would seem but little to My Love, if only they would make some return to Me; but they show Me nothing save coldness, and they reject My endearments. Do thou at least give Me this pleasure of making atonement for their ingratitude.'

Jesus then imposed two exercises of atonement upon her: the first, that she should receive Holy Communion on the first Friday of every month, and the second that she should, every Thursday,

between eleven and twelve at night, remain prostrate on the ground in prayer in expiation for the sins of mankind, and to render some solace to His Heart for such absolute abandonment on the part of His creatures.

But perhaps the most remarkable of these favours with which our Lord deigned to visit His handmaid was in a third vision, granted to her in reward for her great humility and gentle patience under suffering, for she had indeed much to suffer on account of these revelations. She was distrusted by her Superior, doubted by her Confessor, and scoffed at by her sisters in religion, she had to pass through all those fearful phases of interior trial and dark temptation that beset the path of the chosen servants of God; but, remaining faithful throughout, she gave pleasure to her Divine Spouse, Who, in return, recreated her with His loving communications, which made her feel a burning desire to give Him a perfect return of love. Thus it was in this vision during the Octave of Corpus Christi, in the June of 1675, as she knelt in prayer before the Tabernacle, that He confided to her how keenly He felt the coldness and indifference shown to Him in the Sacrament of His Love, especially from hearts consecrated to His service:

‘I therefore demand that the first Friday after

the Octave of Corpus Christi be made a special festival in honour of my Sacred Heart, by receiving Holy Communion on that day, and by making a reparation of honour in atonement for the insults which are offered to It. And I promise that My Heart shall open wide to pour out plentifully the influences of Its Love upon all those who shall give such honour to It, or cause it to be given.'

'Give me, then,' replied Margaret Mary—'give me the means of doing what Thou commandest.'

'Go to My servant Père de la Colombière,' replied our Lord, 'and tell him from Me to exert himself to the utmost of his power in establishing this devotion; but let him not be discouraged by the difficulties he will have to encounter, for he shall succeed in the end; but tell him to remember that he alone is all-powerful who places his confidence not in himself, but in Me.'

This Père de la Colombière (a short sketch of whose life we will presently give, in order to trace in a more complete way the means by which this Devotion to the Sacred Heart was permanently established) had been destined by God to conduct His servant along the difficult path she was at this time called upon to tread; he was peculiarly endowed with natural gifts, but more especially remarkable for his zeal and tender piety. His

was not one of those credulous natures that easily believe in the visions and manifestations of devout people, but he had carefully tried his spiritual daughter, and, being enlightened from on high, he could not refuse to believe what was demanded of him by our Lord through the instrumentality of His servant.

He examined her spirit and written declarations with much circumspection, and he felt himself bound to listen to the message brought to him direct from our Divine Lord; thus being convinced, he felt it was his duty to contribute in every way to the propagation of this Devotion: so, with this conviction, he was the first to consecrate himself to the love and service of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, according to the rules given him by Blessed Margaret Mary. This he did on June 21, 1675, the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi. Being sent into England by his Superiors, Margaret Mary was now left alone to carry her cross, the sure accompaniment of a life of exceptional graces.

There now came to her hours of severe trials and tribulation, hours of pain and dereliction, and many exterior humiliations. Our Lord seemed to redouble her powers of suffering, in order to purify her heart from every stain and fit it yet more to suffer 'like unto His Heart.' He

had warned her of what He had in store for her in those words, ‘Eat and drink at the table of holy delights to strengthen thyself to walk courageously ; for the road is long and difficult, and thou wilt often have to pause and take breath, to rest for awhile in My Heart.’ But after this preparation He fed her with stronger food. ‘Receive,’ He said, ‘My daughter, the cross which I give thee, and implant it in thy heart, have it always before thine eyes, bear it always on thy shoulders : it will make thee experience the most acute torments, which thou canst hardly conceive, continual hunger without being satisfied, thirst that seems unquenchable,’ etc. Thus purified and strengthened by these sufferings, Margaret Mary seemed no longer to belong to herself ; she was now consumed by an ardent desire to absorb her will in the will of God. Her Divine Bridegroom accepted this holocaust of her whole nature, and she signed an act of submission to His will with her own blood. In reward for this heroic deed Jesus Christ gave her the ‘Treasures of His Heart,’ and called her the ‘much-beloved disciple of His own Heart.’

In 1685 Margaret Mary was appointed Mistress of Novices, in which capacity she had ample opportunity of furthering by word and example those precepts of the love of God which during

her novitiate she had imbibed at the Fountain of Love Itself. So much did she strive to impress this devotion in the hearts of her spiritual children, that they soon came to liken her to the beloved disciple St. John.

God had given her special lights in the discernment of spirits, and under her guidance the novices advanced in the thorny path of perfection through the spirit of love. ‘Oh, if you knew how sweet it is to love God!’ she would repeatedly say, with such unction that they declared her words seemed to flow straight from the Heart of Jesus; and ‘this made virtue easy to them.’

It was in this little circle of holy souls that Margaret Mary began her apostolate. She spoke openly of the devotion she was striving to engraft in their lives, and she began to circulate small pictures of the Sacred Heart, traced in ink, to enkindle a flame that was as yet only smouldering on the hearth of their hearts.

On one of her feast-days (July 20) her novices, who held her in great love and esteem, were desirous of showing her some mark of their gratitude and respect. When she heard of this she begged them most earnestly to pay to the Heart of Jesus some extra honour instead of conferring it on herself, and instructed them to offer to Him

all the nosegays and other tributes of affection that they had prepared for her.

The novices entered immediately into the holy views of their mistress, and with all the eagerness with which her fervour had inspired them, they each endeavoured to excel the other in dressing up a little altar beneath a flight of stairs close to the novitiate. There they placed a small paper picture on which they had roughly drawn the Heart of Jesus surrounded with flames, to express the ardour of that excessive charity which He has felt for us. Their mistress was the first to prostrate herself before this symbol of the Love of Jesus, consecrating herself generously to the worship of His Divine Heart with a transport of fervour that only a Seraph could experience. Her little flock followed her example, and responding to the fervour of their mistress, prostrated themselves at her side, each in her turn consecrating her heart to the love of the Adorable Heart of Jesus.

In the excess of her joy, Margaret Mary exclaimed, 'My dear Sisters, you could not have offered me a more pleasing gratification than you have done in paying homage to the Divine Heart of Jesus, and by consecrating yourselves entirely to Him! How happy you are that it has pleased Him to make use of you as the foundation-stones

of the practice of this devotion. Let us continue to pray that He may reign in all hearts.

The heavenly joy that Margaret Mary with her novices had tasted on this holy festival was very soon to be hallowed by contradictions. When what had passed in the novitiate became known throughout the community the general murmuring was great at what they were pleased to call an ‘innovation,’ but she bore this new persecution with the meekness that she had learned from her intimate union with the Source of all meekness, and she was greatly comforted in the midst of her trials by the assurance on the part of our Lord that in spite of this and many more obstacles the interests of His Heart would finally triumph, and would ere long be manifested to the whole Order of the Visitation ; indeed, the accomplishment of this promise was fulfilled before the end of that same year.

The Superior of the Convent of Semur, Mère Greyfié, wrote to Margaret Mary that she and the whole community wished to unite themselves with her, and be associated with her Apostolate of Reparation ; she also told her of an oil-painting she had executed representing the Heart of Jesus surrounded with flames, emblematic of that charity with which It was consumed. It was environed by a crown of thorns, a symbol of the

sufferings which had been the fruit of His Love for man, and which ought also to consecrate our love to Him.

We may imagine what a compensation this was to our Saint for all the distrust her former Superior had shown her in the early days of her first revelations. She sent Mère Greyfié several copies of this picture with the account of the solemn consecration of herself and the whole of the community to the Sacred Heart. ‘This news,’ wrote Margaret Mary in reply to her letter, ‘caused me ten thousand times more joy than if you had given me the wealth of the world.’ But our dear Lord took greater delight in the sufferings of His spouse than in her happiness.

He next demanded of her to choose between the bliss of a Seraph or bearing greater sufferings in order to establish the reign of His Love in the hearts of men. Without a moment’s hesitation she embraced the proffered cross, and her choice was accepted. Thereupon she once more was plunged into a sea of interior suffering and bitterness of spirit, and was so filled with the desire of suffering that she exclaimed, ‘Ah! without the Cross and the Blessed Sacrament I should not be able to support the length of my exile in this vale of tears.’ About this time she wrote to Père de la Colombière these remarkable words: ‘Would

that I could recount, Reverend Father, all that I know regarding this Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and discover to the whole world the treasures of grace which He has stored up in His Heart, and desires to pour out abundantly on all those who will practise it. I conjure you to leave no means untried in order to inspire everyone with its sweet efficacy. Jesus Christ has shown me, in a manner that admits of no doubt, that it was especially by means of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus that He wished to establish everywhere this Devotion, and through its means to draw to Himself an infinite number of faithful servants and grateful children. The treasures of graces and blessings contained in the Sacred Heart are unbounded. I do not know that there is any practice of devotion in spiritual life more calculated to raise a soul in a short time to the highest perfection, and to make it relish the true sweetness which is to be found in the service of Jesus Christ.

‘I say with confidence that if we only knew how pleasing this Devotion is to our Divine Lord, that there is not a Christian, however slight may be his love towards his Saviour, but he would at once adopt its practice.’

‘Induce especially religious persons to embrace it. They will derive such assistance from it that

no other means will be required to restore their first fervour.

'Our Divine Lord has assured me that to those who are employed in labouring for the salvation of souls He will give the power of touching the most hardened hearts, and they will labour with marvellous success if they are themselves penetrated with a tender Devotion to His Sacred Heart. Persons in the world will find in this Devotion all the helps necessary for their state of life: peace in their families, relief in their toils, the blessings of Heaven on all their undertakings, and comfort in their difficulties. In the Sacred Heart they will have a secure place of refuge during life, and more especially at the hour of death. Oh, what a happiness to die after having had always during life Devotion to the Heart of Him Who will hereafter be our Judge!'

At last the time had come which our Lord had destined from all eternity for spreading the fire of the Devotion to His Sacred Heart. On the last day of the Octave of Corpus Christi, of the year 1686, one of the nuns (Mary Magdalen des Escures), who had hitherto been most adverse to this Devotion, requested Margaret Mary to allow her to have the picture of the Sacred Heart. Margaret Mary acceded to her request with great joy, and gave it to her silently, but with a beating

heart. She then went to pray, and made all the novices join with her in praying for the happy issue of the undertaking for which she had suffered so much. The next morning, Friday, when entering the choir, all were greatly surprised to see a little altar fitted up in front of the grille, ornamented with flowers and surrounded by lighted candles, in the centre of which was the picture of the Sacred Heart, and over it a written invitation to all the nuns to consecrate themselves to Its love and service. But their surprise was greater still when they discovered who was the author of this little stratagem. During the whole of the day they spent themselves in venerating this symbol of love; and with one accord they all consecrated themselves to the Sacred Heart, beginning with Sister Mary Magdalen des Escures, who had enthroned the long-despised picture on the little altar in the choir.

On that very day they resolved that a chapel should be erected in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and their zeal was so great that, in spite of the poverty of the house, their plan was carried out and completed before the death of Blessed Margaret Mary.

The Devotion of the Sacred Heart, which originated from the Convent of Semur, was received with great ardour at Paray; it was also adopted

by other houses of the Order, Moulins and Dijon. In this latter a public solemnity in honour of the Sacred Heart was instituted with the consent of the Ecclesiastical Superiors of the Diocese.

And now Margaret Mary's task was done. She had said in her transport of delight on the completion of the first Chapel, 'I may now die content, since the Heart of my Saviour begins to be known.' She was content, and could now sing the *Nunc Dimitis*, and her mission of intercession for sinners which she had begun on earth she was to continue with the intercessory songs of the angels and Saints around the Throne of the Lamb. She knew she was about to die, for her interior sufferings had ceased, and a great peace had taken possession of her heart. True, she suffered much from the fever which consumed her, but she considered these pains light in comparison with the profit she would obtain by bearing them with humility, patience and sweetness. She died on October 17, in the year 1690, at the age of forty-three, having kept her soul in the greatest purity, to fit it to be presented before the Judgment Seat of God, Whose awful justice had for a long time filled her with unspeakable terror.

Her body was laid to rest in the convent choir by her sorrowing sisters, who mourned, not only for the death of such a holy religious, but also

that they had so little valued her whilst she was in their midst.

After her death Devotion to the Sacred Heart spread still more rapidly, and in the year 1691 Père Croiset, S.J., published a book on this Devotion, which was enthusiastically received throughout France and Italy. Its publication had been foreseen by Blessed Margaret Mary soon after her interview with this holy Jesuit, and the result of its promulgation so stirred the minds of the people that they caused altars to be built, and churches to be erected, under the patronage of the Sacred Heart, confraternities were likewise founded, and so eagerly did the hearts of men respond to this last inspiration of Divine Love, that by the year 1726 no less than three hundred and seventeen confraternities had sprung into existence, dioceses were dedicated to Its honour, and in times of imminent peril whole countries were drawn to seek shelter under the protection of the Adorable Heart of Jesus. Political enmities have been stayed, and when the greater danger of the loss of the true Faith has been at stake, the people with one accord have turned for strength, light, and healing to this compassionate Heart, and never without avail. Thus, for these last three hundred years, Devotion to the Sacred Heart has grown, spread, and fructified all from

such a tiny seed as that little paper picture in the convent chapel of Paray.

As many beautiful treatises and learned books have been written to explain the nature, object, and motive of this Devotion, it would be out of place for us to attempt in the narrow limit of this work any kind of dissertation as to its full character and spirit ; we would merely wish to point out this Devotion as, first, a *power* which it exercises over the greatest obstacles of whatever kind, and secondly, as an *antidote* against a false speculation of mind, and that cold egotism which demoralizes all grades of society ; for it necessitates the submission of the intellect to God's Commandments, and finally it brings every human soul face to face with the question, 'Am I making myself worthy of the promises of Jesus Christ ?' for our Divine Lord Himself has blessed the result of practising this Devotion with the following promises :

1. I will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life.
2. I will establish peace in their houses.
3. I will console them in their sorrows.
4. I will be their sure refuge during life, and above all, at the hour of death.
5. I will pour abundant blessings on all their undertakings.

6. Sinners shall find in My Heart a source and ocean of mercy.
7. Tepid souls shall thereby become fervent.
8. Fervent souls shall rise thereby to the highest degrees of perfection.
9. I will bless every place where there is a picture of My Heart exposed and venerated.
10. I will give priests who spread this devotion a special power to move the hardest hearts.
11. All those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, never to be effaced.
12. I promise that, in the excessive mercy of My Heart, My All-powerful Love will grant to those who go to Communion on nine consecutive first Fridays of the month the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in My disgrace, nor without receiving the Sacraments; My Divine Heart shall be their sure refuge in this last moment.*

2. Père Claude de la Colombière.

If it was the privilege of the daughters of the Visitation Order to make the devotion to the

* Margaret Mary Alacoque was declared Blessed by Pius IX. in the year 1864. An Office and Mass was allowed to be said in her honour, and her feast was appointed to be kept on October 17.

Sacred Heart known, and to be the faithful messengers of this errand of love, it was reserved in a more special manner to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus to promulgate its utility and cultus; and to them the promise was made that their 'Apostolic labours should bear fruit beyond expectation,' and that this Devotion should be to them 'Salvation and perfection.'

Père de la Colombière—now 'Venerable'—was born at St. Symphorien d'Ozan, on the Feast of the Purification, 1641. His name must for ever be coupled with that of Blessed Margaret Mary and Devotion to the Sacred Heart, for it was this holy Jesuit whom our Lord had singled out to be the director and support of the humble nun who had never before been truly understood. He was the 'faithful servant' and 'true friend' to whom she had been bidden to go in one of those mysterious communications in the early days of her religious life.

Claude de la Colombière was in his eighteenth year when he passed from the Jesuit College at Lyons to the novitiate of the Society; and after his ordination, at the end of his third year of probation at Lyons, he was sent to be Superior at Paray-le-Monial. It was at this time that he gave his first spiritual conference to the daughters of St. Francis de Sales; and as Margaret Mary

listened to his words, an interior voice told her that here was indeed the favoured soul who was to share her favours and her trials.

This happened in the year 1674, and in the Lent of the following year he became spiritually acquainted with the state of her soul, as she said herself, ‘Though with much reluctance, I laid bare my whole heart to him, and showed to him the whole state of my soul, both the good and the bad.’

Père de la Colombière was not slow to recognise the light and power of God in the revelations and visions confided to him, and though he acted with great prudence, after much prayer he pronounced his belief that they were the ‘work of God.’ After this decision, he gave himself entirely to the task of spreading this Devotion to the Sacred Heart, and he began by consecrating himself to Its service on June 21, 1676. On that day he received such an increase of grace and love of God that he felt more than ever assured of the truth of the revelations and the efficacy of this Devotion.

In a letter he wrote about this time to his sister, who was a nun of the Visitation Order, he says :

‘I entreat you to receive Holy Communion on the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi, in

order to make atonement for the insults offered to our Lord. This custom has been recommended by a person of wonderful holiness, who declares that the greatest blessings shall come to those who give this token of love to our Lord. Try to win over your friends to the practice of a like devotion.'

For a whole year after this he remained at Paray, the constant guide and counsellor of Margaret Mary, their souls knit together by the bond of that one earnest desire to promote the interests of Jesus Christ, as manifested in this Devotion. He was, as it were, passing through this school of the Sacred Heart, and learning the lessons of his future Apostolate through the agency of his lowly penitent; but when that period had expired, he went forth to preach what he had learned therein. Fresh from this supernatural atmosphere, he was sent to face the Royal Court of the Queen of England, Mary of Modena, wife of James II. As her Chaplain, he had to preach, although secretly, before the Court, and even in many other parts of London, which was at this time steeped in heresy, and teeming with those who were endeavouring to blot out the very name of 'Catholic' from the hearts and memories of men. Straight from the fire of the Sacred Heart, he had to confront the coldness of

a people clamorous for the extinction of everything holy; yet such was the success of his ministry during the four years he lived in our capital, that it was from St. James's Palace that the first petition was sent to the Holy See for the establishment of the Feast of the Sacred Heart. It was in the Royal Chapel of this Palace that Père de la Colombière so often said the prayer which he had composed for himself and for England; and could we breathe a more appropriate one for ourselves and the present interests of the Church than the following:

'O my God, Thou must give us a new heart—a heart like Thine. Thou must give us Thine own Heart. Come, O loving Heart of Jesus, and place Thyself in my breast; come and kindle there a love great enough, if it be possible, to fulfil the duty I have of loving Thee.'

He had the happiness of seeing this prayer answered in numerous cases; for through his labours many were reconciled to the Faith, many left their life of worldliness for the religious state, and even those whose duty it was to remain amidst the dangers of the Court were influenced by him to be less frivolous, and more earnest in seeking their eternal salvation.

England undoubtedly owes much to this exiled Jesuit, and we cannot help noticing as somewhat

remarkable that he was born on February 2, the day on which the Roman Martyrology commemorates the Feast of St. Lawrence, one of those forty Benedictine monks whom St. Augustine brought over to this land of ours, and whom he consecrated first Archbishop of Canterbury. Did he not receive with his name the glorious mission of preaching the Gospel on foreign soil? We cannot tell what may have been the Saint's baptismal gift to this venerable servant of God, but we think this incident will increase the interest of all English-speaking Catholics in furthering the cause of his beatification, even if the Holy Father had not expressed his desire to see him publicly honoured on our altars. It is two years since Leo XIII. styled him 'My friend since my childhood.' He said, 'I have always loved him because of what I read about him, and on account of his relation with the Sacred Heart and Blessed Margaret Mary. Oh yes, I much desire his beatification.'

His banishment from England, his sufferings and arrest, are matters of history, and have been so recently described in various magazines that we will not enlarge upon them here. On his return to Lyons he passed by Paray-le-Monial, and had a brief interview with Blessed Margaret Mary, concerning which he tells one of her Superiors

that he 'was much consoled by this visit'; and it was not to be wondered at that this heavenly intercourse 'was as oil poured out' on his soul after the guarded and narrow limits of the English Court.

Leaving Paray, he lived for two and a half years at Lyons, during twelve months of which he was spiritual director of the students of the Society of Jesus. Among those whom he trained and filled with devotion to the Sacred Heart were the Père de Gallifet and Père Croiset. The first named has been honoured with the title of 'Apostle of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart,' and to him we owe the publication of the memoir of Blessed Margaret Mary, written by herself. It was he also who, notwithstanding the first rebuff from Rome, persevered until he obtained the sanction of the Holy See for the establishment of the Feast.

Père Croiset was privileged to have an interview with Blessed Margaret Mary, and she foretold of him that the devotion would 'be everywhere made known through means of a book of Père Croiset, a Jesuit.' How this prophecy was in part fulfilled, even in her own lifetime, we think will interest our readers to learn, and therefore we give the account in the holy nun's own words. Writing to a friend, she says :

'I must tell you something which is for the glory of the Divine Heart, and will cause you to bless It. I had given one of the Dijon books to a lady from Lyons, who in return gave it to a young Father to read. Having shown it to his pupils at Lyons, they took such a fancy to it that they made a great many copies, both of the litanies and of the prayers, which they recited very devoutly. And these children having shown them to others, these also got such a great devotion to them. As they were not able to make copies enough, they determined to have one of these books printed, offering to bear the expense. One young workman was so anxious to take upon himself the expense, that they had to yield to his devotion. And when he went himself to one of the chief booksellers of Lyons, he too felt himself so moved with love of this Divine Heart that he offered out of devotion to publish it without making any charge, which caused a holy combat between the youth and himself. But he, having at length gained his point, got the book of the Sacred Heart, and went to one of his friends to have it written more fully, and a holy religious undertook this. So it is newly printed, and very beautiful, and well bound, and the sale has been so great that a new edition has been brought out since June 19, and now, on August 21, there are

no longer any copies left, and it is therefore going to be reprinted for the third time.'

In 1681 Père Claude, as he was always called, was sent from Lyons to Paray, as if to die under the shadow of the sanctuary which he loved so well, for he only survived the change six months, dying on February 15, 1682. During those brief months he never flagged in teaching his penitents the Devotion of the 'Holy Hour,' of receiving Holy Communion on the first Friday of each month, and of setting apart the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi as a special feast in honour of the Sacred Heart.

We cannot do better in concluding this sketch than by quoting a passage from a pastoral letter written by a Vicar Apostolic in India to his people, and which beautifully describes the spirit of unselfishness which inflamed the soul of Père de la Columbière—a spirit which is the very essence of Christianity itself, and which must take possession of all souls who wish to share in the life and work of the Sacred Heart.

'A true Catholic,' he says, 'is not the man who shuts himself up in his own soul, and is satisfied that is secure, without troubling himself about the good of his neighbour. No, for the very name of Catholic teaches him that his heart ought to

embrace the interests of Jesus Christ in the whole world, and to labour, by prayer at least, if he can do no more, to promote everywhere, and in every soul, the glory of God and the accomplishment of His holy will.'

3. *The Celebrated Bull 'Auctorem Fidei.*

It will not be out of place for us to devote a few words to the famous Bull of Pius VI., which settled once and for all the objections which even some Catholics made to the worship of the Sacred Heart, that is to say, set at rest all minds submissive to Rome—for no Bull has ever yet been issued that could silence the tongues of disputants, as objections, especially in matters of worship and religion, float in the very air we breathe.

On the first rise of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, the Jansenists began at once to assail its orthodoxy with many most absurd calumnies. Absurd as they were, they found advocates among certain Catholics, at the time of the Synod of Pistoia, which was convened by the Jansenistic Bishop, Scipio Ricci,* in 1786, for the sole purpose of eradicating, if possible, this Devo-

* Pius VII. had the great happiness of reconciling the Bishop Ricci to the Church, who before his death renounced all his errors.

tion, which they called a 'dangerous innovation,' for these 'over-scrupulous' controversialists accused the adorers of the Sacred Heart of separating the human nature of Jesus from the Divine. They were condemned in the following terms in the Bull *Auctorem Fidei*: 'The proposition which asserts that to adore the humanity of Christ directly, much more any part of it, would always be to give Divine honours to a creature, inasmuch as by this word 'directly' it is intended to reprobate the Divine adoration which the faithful give to the humanity of Christ, as if such adoration by which the humanity and the life-giving flesh of Christ is adored—not, indeed, for its own sake, and as if mere flesh (*non quidem propter se et tanquam nuda caro*), but as it is united to the Divinity—would be Divine honour given to a creature, and not that one and the same adoration by which the Word Incarnate with His own flesh is adored according to the Fifth General Council of Constantinople (Canon IX.), is a proposition false, captious, derogatory, and injurious to the pious and due adoration given, and to be given, by the faithful to the humanity of Christ.

'The doctrine which rejects the Devotion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus as among devotions described as new, erroneous, or at least dangerous, if understood of this Devotion such as the Holy

See has approved, is false, rash, pernicious, offensive to pious ears, and injurious to the Holy See.

'Also, inasmuch as it censures the worshippers of the Heart of Jesus, even by that name, for not perceiving that the sacred flesh of Christ, or any part of the same, or even the whole humanity when separated and divided from the Divinity, cannot be adored with the worship of latria—as if the faithful do adore the Heart of Jesus "separated" or "divided" from the Divinity, while they adore it as it is the Heart of Jesus, the Heart, that is, of the Person of the Word, to Whom it is inseparably united in the same way as the bloodless Body of Christ in the three days of death was adorable in the sepulchre without separation or division from the Divinity—is a proposition captious and injurious to the faithful who worship the Heart of Christ.'

So we see the Heart of Jesus cannot be worshipped as a symbol of charity without worshipping the Heart of Jesus Itself. But this question is doubly set at rest, first by Pius VI. in the Bull *Auctorem Fidei*, above quoted, in which the Pontiff declares that the faithful adore the Heart of Jesus as it is the Heart of Jesus, the Heart, that is, of the Person of the Word, to Whom it is inseparably united, in the same way as the blood-

less Body of Christ in the three days of death was adored in the sepulchre without separation or division from the Divinity.

Again, Pius IX., in the Apostolic Letters of Beatification of Blessed Margaret Mary, August 19, 1864, says:

'Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, desired nothing more than to kindle the flame of charity by which His Heart was burning in all ways in the hearts of men; . . . but that He might the more kindle this fire of charity, it was His will that the veneration and worship of His Sacred Heart should be instituted and promoted. . . . To Blessed Margaret Mary, fervently praying before the most august Sacrament of the Eucharist, it was made known by Christ our Lord that it would be most grateful to Him if the worship of His Most Sacred Heart, burning with the fire of Charity for mankind, should be instituted.'

The Visitation Order had, by the permission of Clement XIII., celebrated the Feast of the Sacred Heart with a special Office and Mass. Pius VI. extended this privilege to many dioceses and religious orders; but it was Pius IX. who directed the Feast to be celebrated on the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi throughout the world—'In order to move the faithful anew to

love, and to make a return of love to the Wounded Heart of Him Who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own Blood.'

The Catholic Church was solemnly consecrated in 1875 by Pius IX. to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and in 1889 Pope Leo XIII. raised the Feast to the rite of Double of the First Class.

'The Holy Father' (we quote from a pastoral), 'who has nothing more at heart than that the faithful should grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, gladly received their petition, having especially in view that the faithful should find refuge and defence, in spite of the working of wickedness, in this most saving Devotion, and that, inflamed with burning love of the most Holy Redeemer, they should offer Him a worthy homage of praise and expiation, and at the same time should most fervently beg the Divine mercy for the growth of faith, and the peace and safety of the Christian people. The Holy Father, being moved by these considerations, has, by special favour and privilege, decreed that the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus be celebrated throughout the world as a Double of the First Class.'

It is worthy of remark that the Benedictines were among the first of the religious orders to petition to place the Feast of the Sacred Heart

on their calendar. The English Benedictine nuns at Bruges as early as 1768 had the privilege of aggregating their community to the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, and this was only three years after Pope Clement XIII. had granted the first Mass and Office in Its honour. This was truly in accordance with the spirit of SS. Gertrude and Mechtilde.

II.

EXAMPLES AND SAYINGS OF THE SAINTS CONCERNING THIS DEVOTION.

1. *The Spear and Nails of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

AHE Church celebrates the Feast of the Holy Lance and Nails which pierced our Saviour's Body on the Friday after the First Sunday of Lent. Of these instruments of our Lord's Passion Innocent VI. in his Decree says: 'Although the Lance and Nails and the other life-giving instruments of the bitter Passion of our Lord ought to be venerated in every place and by all Christians, nevertheless we still consider it fitting that a proper Feast should be instituted in their honour.'

St. Augustine's beautiful expressions of confidence drawn from his meditations on these instruments must be quoted here: 'I cannot be terrified at sight of my sins when I call to mind the death of my Lord, because my sins cannot

weigh in the balance against such a death. Longinus opened for me with the iron of his lance the side of Jesus Christ. I enter there, and there I repose in full security. Let him who fears love. Charity dispels fear.' And St. Bernard says : ' Could our Saviour have better shown us that fire of love which so inflames His Heart than that He would not only let His Body, but even His very Heart, be transfixed with the Lance ?' Again : ' The soldier pierced with his lance this Divine Heart which had long before been wounded with the dart of Love.'

St. Lawrence Justinian goes still further, and says : ' With the iron spear our Saviour was once pierced in His Body, whereas the arrow of most ardent Love had already wounded His Heart ; once, and by one man, was He pierced in His Body, but how often, and by how many, is He wounded in His Heart !' Innocent IV. exclaims : ' O happy spear which was made worthy to enrich us with so many graces and to increase the glory of so great a triumph !' St. Bonaventure, the seraphic son of a seraphic Father, writes most beautifully on this subject : ' Behold the gates of Paradise stand wide open, and the entrance is not guarded, as was that of the earthly paradise, by an angel with a flaming sword. No, through the spear of the Chieftain an entrance is made sure

for us ; the Exchequer of Wisdom and of Eternal Love stands open. Let all come in through the wide openings of the Five Wounds. O happy spear ! that was worthy to open such a gate. Indeed, I earnestly wish I had been that spear ; never would I have come out of the Sacred and Divine Heart. This is my eternal resting-place. This have I chosen ; herein will I dwell. O Christ ! O Soul ! formed to the likeness of God, how is it possible that Thou art not enraptured with joy ? Thy Heavenly Spouse has in His transcendent Love opened His inmost Heart to thee, that thou mightest offer Him Thine !'

On this Feast a few years ago an entire Order consecrated itself to the Sacred Heart, which example has lately been followed by a Benedictine congregation in France.

2. St. Longinus and the Fathers of the Church.

On March 15 the Church keeps the Feast of St. Longinus. He was a native of Cappadocia, and, being a soldier, was commanded by Pilate first to stand by the Cross, and then to watch at the Tomb of the Crucified Christ. On this occasion he was one of those enlightened by God, who, striking their breasts, exclaimed, ' Truly this is the Son of God.' Many years later he suffered martyrdom, in company with two others who had

been his comrades in the military service. Holy Church refers to Longinus when she says: 'A soldier opened His Side with a spear, and immediately there flowed forth blood and water.'

It is interesting to notice how the Holy Fathers honoured the Sacred Heart in the first centuries. They contemplate It either as the origin of the Church, as the Source of the Holy Sacraments, as the Harbour in dangers and temptations, or, again, as our Salvation after the fall. Père Croiset justly remarks that all the saints who were favoured with extraordinary graces were filled with an interior and tender love for Jesus. Scarcely any are to be found who had not honoured with a special devotion the wounded Heart of our Divine Saviour. St. Austin, commenting on the above-mentioned text of the Gospel, says: 'Remark, that the Evangelist does not say that "a soldier wounded His Side," but "opened it," that thereby the door of Life might remain open to us, for here is the Source of that Sacrament without which we cannot attain to life eternal. The Blood that was shed flowed for the remission of sins, and the Water is to us both a bath and a drink.' Then he makes use of two of his beautiful comparisons. 'As there was an opening,' he says, 'in the Ark of Noah through which all had to enter who were to be saved, so likewise do we

also enter into the Heart of Jesus through the Wound of His Side. And as the first woman was formed from the side of the sleeping Adam, and was called "life" and "the mother of all the living," so also the second Adam slept the sleep of death upon the Cross, in order that a Bride might be formed for Him and come forth from His Side whilst He slept.' 'O death, which has caused all the dead to live again ! What is purer than this Blood ? what more healing than these Wounds ?'

St. Bernard speaks in the same strain when he thus addresses the religious soul : ' Consider what should be thy sentiments towards God ! Consider what a return of love shouldst thou make to God, Who has so prized, so exalted thee, as to form thee from His own Side when for thee on the Cross He slept the sleep of death.' St. Cyril of Alexandria says : ' When the soldiers saw that Jesus had bowed His Head they thought He was dead, and that therefore it would be useless to break His legs ; but as they were uncertain if He were quite dead, they opened His Side with a lance, from which flowed forth Blood mingled with Water, a type of the Holy Mysteries and of Baptism.'

Pope Innocent VI., commenting on the words of St. Augustine mentioned above, writes :

'Amongst the various mysteries of the sufferings of our Saviour we must attentively notice that He permitted a lance to pierce His Side after His death in order that through that holy Water and Blood might be built up His Bride, the One Unspotted Virgin, Holy Mother Church.' And quoting these words of the Prophet Zachary, 'In those days there shall be a Fountain opened to the House of Israel and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for the washing of the sinner and the unclean woman,' he says: 'O blessed aperture in the Holy Side from which flow out to us so many and such great benefits of Divine Love.' Let us once more listen to St. Augustine, who, convinced, like St. Cyril of Alexandria, that through the Wound in the Side of Jesus a source of grace and an asylum of refuge was opened to us, crieth out: 'Longinus with the point of his lance opened the Side of Christ; in this Side I will hide myself and rest in perfect security.' St. Bernard in one of his works exclaims: 'For this cause, O my Jesus, was Thy Side pierced, that an access might ever stand open to us; Thy Heart was wounded that we might dwell in It, freed from all outward disturbance. And for this reason also was It wounded, that by the visible Wound we might perceive the invisible wound of Love; the corporal wound is the figure of the

spiritual one. And we, although still living in the flesh, let us love, cherish, and embrace this our Beloved Wounded One, Whom the godless builders pierced in Hands, Feet, Side, and Heart, and let us earnestly beseech Him to wound with the arrow of His Love our hard impenitent hearts bound with the fetters of self-love.'

It was of this Wound in His Heart that our Divine Saviour spoke when He said to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, 'Behold this Heart which hath so loved men that It hath spared nothing, even to the last drop of blood, exhausting and consuming Itself to show them Its love. . . . If they would only give Me some return of love, I should esteem as nothing all My Love and all that I have done for them ; but they show Me nothing but coldness, and My earnest endeavours to do them good they repay with the most repulsive contempt. Do you at least give Me this pleasure of supplying for their ingratitude as far as you are able.'

3. *St. Angela of Foligno.*

St. Angela of Foligno had in the beginning of her conversion to contend with great difficulties. The worldly life she had formerly led had taken such deep root in her mind that it could only be torn out by the most violent efforts. Satan

whispered to her that she would never be able to endure such a life, that it was imprudent to impose such sacrifices on herself, and that she would only be considered to have lost her reason. During this interior conflict, in great anguish of soul she began earnestly to pray to God to succour her. While she was praying she fell asleep, and dreamed that she saw the Heart of Jesus and heard these words: 'In this Heart is perfect truth, and not a shadow of falsehood can be found herein.' She did not immediately understand what this could mean in her regard; but later our Lord made her appreciate how true He is to His promise always to help those who pray to Him. 'Oh, if you only knew,' He said, 'all that I have suffered for your sins alone! Thy heart, contrary to the commandments of God, was full of anger, envy, bitterness and concupiscence, a sea of sinful desires and evil passions; but I have allowed My Heart to be pierced through, and out of It cometh a healing virtue to cure all the spiritual diseases of the human heart. Water flowed from It to extinguish the flames of concupiscence, and Blood to take away sorrow and weariness.' Thus did our Lord comfort and strengthen her for further conflicts, and through her unwavering confidence in the Sacred Heart she fought victoriously, and arrived at the highest perfection.

4. St. Peter Damian.

On February 23 is kept the Feast of St. Peter Damian, Cardinal, who was born in 1073. This Saint gives us the best explanation of the following expressions in the Litany of the Sacred Heart: 'Heart of Jesus, Treasury of the Wisdom and the Knowledge of God,' 'Refuge of sinners,' 'Strength of the weak,' 'Terror of devils,' 'Consolation of the afflicted,' 'have mercy on us.' He writes on this subject as follows: 'As the Heart of Jesus is the Treasury of the Wisdom and the Knowledge of God, he draws from that heavenly treasury the gifts with which, in lavish generosity, He enriches our poverty. He rests at the Fountain of everlasting life, not that He may Himself drink of the overflowing waters of Divine Science, but to present them to us at the appointed time.'

Priests should draw from the Divine Heart of our Lord all the grace and helps they need in the fulfilment of their ministry. In another place our Blessed Lord affirms that 'in this Adorable Heart we shall find weapons for our defence, means for our sanctification, powerful succour against temptation, the sweetest consolation in sorrow, and the purest happiness in this valley of tears.' And He cries out to the poor soul laden with sin, 'If you are sad, if you are confounded

at the recollection of your sins, if your heart is agitated with many and violent passions, throw yourself into the Heart of Jesus; It is a secure haven, It is a refuge for the miserable, and the salvation of all Christians. Come to Me, you who labour and are heavy burdened, and I will refresh you. Learn of Me, that I am meek and humble of Heart, and you shall find rest to your souls.'

5. *St. Mechtilde.*

On February 25 occurs the Feast of St. Mechtilde, sister of St. Gertrude, Countess of Hackeborn, who was born in Eisleben, and was later Abbess of a Benedictine monastery. Perhaps dear reader, you are a member of the Apostleship of prayer; if so, learn from the Saint of this day how you can best fulfil your Apostolate. A member of the Apostleship of Prayer has three great duties to fulfil: (1) To honour in an especial manner the Sacred Heart of Jesus; (2) to pray, work, and suffer for the interests of that Divine Heart by offering up for those intentions his daily prayers, works and sufferings in union with our dearest Lord's unceasing prayer in the Tabernacle; and (3) he must make this offering to the Sacred Heart through the heart of His Mother Mary.

In illustration of the first duty we read in the life of St. Mechtilde that the beginning of her devotion to the Sacred Heart was as follows: Our Lord said to her, 'I give you My Heart as a pledge; I give It you as a place of refuge.' From this time forward she received at nearly every vision some new grace from this all-loving Heart, so that she herself said: 'If I were to write down all that I have received from this Divine Heart, it would fill a book as large as the Breviary.' Once, after Holy Communion, she saw our Lord take her heart and so unite it with His own that the two hearts formed but one heart. And our Blessed Lord immediately said to her: 'Thus should the hearts of all men be united with Me.' At the Elevation she once saw the Sacred Heart under the symbol of a flaming torch, which our Blessed Lord Himself, as Sacrificing Priest, offered up. Our Lord on another occasion said to her: 'As a man continually sees his own hands, so I from My very infancy, until the last hour of My life, contemplated unceasingly in My Heart, the agonizing doath I was to suffer.' When she was praying for another person that our Lord would give her a humble and pure heart (undoubtedly the best grace we can pray for), our Saviour said to her: 'All things whatsoever anyone wishes and desires, let him seek it in My Heart, as a

child goes in all confidence to his father for whatever he wants.' In later years our Blessed Lord said to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque: 'Announce and publish to the whole world that I set no bounds or limits to the gifts of grace which they shall receive who seek them from My Heart.' Finally, He said to St. Mechtilde: 'My Divine Heart shall be to you as a rest;' and then she sang most sweetly to Him the following verse:

'O Heart of Jesus, sweetest love,
 Hide me in Thy Side;
Make my heart to dwell therein,
 And evermore abide.

'To spend itself for love of Thee,
 Free from self-love's smart,
O Heart of Jesus, sweetest love !
 O hide me in Thy Heart !'

6. The Venerable Thomas of Jesus.

On April 17, 1582, the Venerable Thomas of Jesus, of the Hermits of St. Augustine, died in captivity amongst the Moors, at Sagena, in Africa. Born in the year 1530, of one of the most distinguished families of Portugal, he entered, at the early age of fifteen, into the Order of the Hermits of St. Augustine and was later on made Novice Master. Some years afterwards he retired, with leave of his Superior, into another monastery of his Order where discipline was

more rigorously observed. He was called thence, in the year 1578, by King Sebastian, and appointed Chaplain to the troops who were setting out on an African campaign against the Mahometan Moors. Whilst he was exhorting and encouraging the soldiers to fight valiantly in the cause of the true faith against the Moors, he was taken prisoner and sold to a marabout (a Mahometan monk). Although many of his relations and friends wished to pay his ransom, he would not suffer it, but chose of his own free-will to remain in Morocco amongst the captive Christians; for he saw that many, from the loathsomeness of their dungeons and the cruel treatment they received from their masters, were in great danger of renouncing their faith. In order to comfort and strengthen these poor afflicted Christians, he wrote in his prison his renowned book 'The Sufferings of Christ.' From many passages in this book one can see how this holy priest, in concord with Blessed Margaret Mary, considered the Sacred Heart of Jesus, first, as the seal of the greatest and yet unrequited love; secondly, as the abyss of sorrow and suffering; and thirdly as our place of refuge in every necessity, First 'Love has the nature of fire, the mightiest and most active of the elements, therefore God is called a "con-

suming fire," on account of the incomprehensible works of His Love, which are beyond the grasp of man's mind and intellect ; for as a fire burns with so much the more strength and ardour in proportion as the fuel cast upon it is the more meet and suitable for burning, so no human intellect can comprehend with what unspeakable intensity love works upon the Divine purity and majesty of the Sacred Heart. The Incarnate Word burned with this love. It burned with the desire of perfecting that for which It had been charged, and was compelled to remain hidden and unknown, waiting months and years, until the time appointed by the Divine decree had come.' Secondly, this love is also His pain. 'Oh, how little do the lovers of the world understand this kind of suffering ; he who truly loves Thee, O Lord, can understand this pain. What kind of pain must it be for Thee, O my Lord, to love, to desire, to hope and to be inflamed by the immense flames of Thy pure Love, if even a spark which falls from Thee upon Thy servants produces such a longing to be united to Thee that life becomes from henceforth a continual martyrdom !' He considers it in the third place as 'a place of refuge.' 'Open, O heaven, and let me see my Lord ! Oh, kind Jesus, what do I say ? Heaven is deaf and does not understand me. Thy sweet Heart is my

living Heaven. This has eyes and sees, ears and hears, a will and loves, wisdom and understands, beauty and enlivens, light and enlightens. O my living Heaven, Thou seest and understandest me; open to me, and let me behold what takes place within Thee. Receive me, my sweet Heaven, enclose me in Thee, and then men may say of me what they like! Because of Thy gentle nature Thou canst not be hard on the sinner; be not then hard on me; for if I am blind, send me Thy light. I know that Thou longest for me, and Thou knowest that I long for Thee. Open to me, open and receive me!

7. St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi.

St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi died on May 25, 1607. From the life of this wonderful Saint we will especially bring forward two points. First, her Apostolate of Prayer, springing from her love of the Sacred Heart. One evening, in the year 1583, when Magdalen was still in the novitiate of the Carmelite Order, she suddenly cried out, overcome with grief: 'O Love, how hast Thou been wounded! Ah! man knows Thee not—man loves Thee not!' The Novice Mistress hastened to her, and commanded her to get into bed. 'My mother, how can I stay in bed,' she replied, 'whilst the Adorable Heart of my Saviour is

wounded so much?' But the Superior persisted, and Magdalen answered like a true saint: 'Now I will lie down, in order to satisfy obedience.'

When she herself became Mistress of Novices, she commended nothing so much to her spiritual daughters as prayer and continual union with God. Some considered this almost an impossibility; and perhaps you do, too, dear reader. But listen to what Magdalen told her novices: 'It is true we cannot always be united to God by prayer and meditation: that can only be done in heaven: but what can always be done on earth is to do all with a good intention for the honour of God and the conversion of sinners.' Magdalen was instructed on this point by extraordinary lights from heaven. Once God complained to her that He could find no one to appease His anger which was raised against sinners. Thereupon she offered to God the Precious Blood of His Son, saying: 'Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son, for sin, for my sins, and for the wants of Holy Church, and for the poor souls in Purgatory.* Our Lord showed her many souls whose conversion or deliverance from the pains of Purgatory she had effected by this means.

* 100 days' indulgence for each recital. Applicable to the souls in Purgatory.

Among the twenty rules of life which our Lord Himself gave her, the eighteenth was: 'Continue in union with the faithful, who are the members of My mystical body, the Church, to lay all thy exterior and interior acts on the Altar of My Heart.'

The second we will notice, were the graces she received from the Divine Heart. In an ecstasy which our Lord permitted her to have she said to the Sisters who were present: 'See how the Choir of Powers surround the holy Wound of the Side of my Lord, that precious pledge of the Bride, without which we can hardly consider ourselves as His brides; I espouse myself to Thee for ever, my Jesus!' When she was considering the frightful sins which are committed in the world she called out: 'O unhappy men, who only give yourselves to vain things, and fall into grievous crimes! They wish to exalt themselves, and yet they fall into the greatest depths. O Heart of Jesus, men know Thee not; they have forsaken Thee; they would not listen to Thee, when Thou wishedst that they should live virtuously! O ungrateful creatures, why do you oppose your God?' After which she was silent, and passed an hour and a half in a state of trembling and fear. Then she became suddenly cheerful, for Christ, to Whom this true

Apostolate was pleasing, appeared to her and gave her the ring of their espousals with His own Hand, and some days later He placed His crown of thorns upon her head. On the eve of the Feast of the Annunciation of our Blessed Lady she fell into an ecstasy, whilst meditating on the mysteries of the Incarnation, which lasted eleven hours; the Blessed Virgin then spoke to her in the following manner: 'You can see now how they opened the Side of my Son, but it is there you will find rest and peace.' It was at this time that the words, 'And the Word was made flesh,' were inscribed in a wonderful manner on her heart, the 'Word' in letters of gold, the remaining words in letters of blood. At the end of the vision she stretched out her arms in holy fervour of love, raised herself towards her Heavenly Bridegroom, and received from Him His own Heart.

8. *Père James Alvarez de Paz, S.J.*

Père James Alvarez de Paz died on January 17, 1620, at Potosi, in Peru. Born at Toledo on February 24, 1578, he entered the Society of Jesus in his eighteenth year, and afterwards acted as Professor of Philosophy and Theology at Lima. In his writings he speaks thus concerning the Sacred Heart: 'Try to enter into

the Heart of our Lord Jesus, and meditate upon It, and take It for a pattern. Penetrate carefully into this Heart of our Lord, the purest and holiest of all hearts, in order that thou mayest endeavour to have a heart like unto this One, by sweetness at prayer, and fervour at thy work.' Then he added: 'O Saviour of men, Christ Jesus, Whose work is our Redemption, and Whose longing is for our perfection, I conjure Thee, open to me Thy Sacred Heart, this door to life, this source of living water, that through It I may enter into Thy knowledge, and drink that water of true virtue which precludes all thirst after temporal things.'

9. *St. Francis of Sales.*

St. Francis of Sales, Bishop of Geneva, died in 1622. The Church keeps his feast on January 29. He was the founder of the Visitation Order, which numbered Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque amongst its numbers.

St. Francis very closely resembled in his life the spirit of the Sacred Heart; he perfectly understood, and practised heroically, that admonition of our Saviour, 'Learn of Me to be meek and humble of heart.' It must have been in a prophetic spirit that he called his spiritual children 'the daughters of the Divine Heart.'

Many beautiful passages about the Sacred Heart are to be found in his writings, but one which especially recommends itself to the Apostleship of Prayer may be quoted here: 'If you would wish to preach with me,' he says, 'pray daily to our Lord to grant words to my lips which may be according to His Heart. How often is it that we say appropriate words because some good soul is praying for us, and has obtained this grace for us; is it not the one that prays who in reality preaches? and with this advantage, unconsciously doing good, so escapes the dangers of vanity. Just in the same way with regard to playing the organ, the one who blows, in a sense, has all the responsible part, and yet earns no praise for his labours. Pray, then, often for me, and you will thus preach for me.'

St. Francis appeared to Blessed Margaret Mary towards the close of her life, on his Feast-day, accompanied by St. Jane Frances de Chantal, and in very grave words he complained about some of her nuns who were wanting in simplicity and humility. Blessed Margaret Mary then asked her holy founder in what manner one can sin against these virtues, and he answered her that this was done particularly by anyone accusing herself of her faults with dissimulation, or justifying herself, or only seeking self and her

own honour. She then asked him to tell her a suitable remedy. The Saint pointed to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and told her to meditate on His Love, and that this would be the most efficacious means for correcting such faults; and he added: ‘Through this Divine Heart my daughters will be saved from being overcome by that diabolical spirit of deceit and pride, a spirit which most artfully endeavours to destroy the spirit of humility and simplicity, and which Satan makes use of in order to lead many souls to destruction.’ Alas! these words of the Saint were only too soon fulfilled in the Jansenistic contest against the Devotion to the Sacred Heart; and again in our own day Satan makes use of this rebellious spirit to drag many souls to ruin. But we have the same remedy offered to us as in those days, namely, the love and devotion to the humble Heart of Jesus.

10. *Pope Pius VIII.*

Pope Pius VIII. died on November 30, 1830. When he was still Bishop of Montalto, he established in his cathedral the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and in such a manner that we cannot well pass it over, as it shows how such constitutions should be established, with great profit to souls; and as we think it is not generally

known, we will here relate it. When the faithful of his flock sent a petition to him concerning the establishing of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, it was the Pope himself who wrote down the decree of its erection. In this decree he expresses his great delight in words quoted mostly from the Holy Scripture, for in the Divine Heart of Jesus he beheld the refuge of sinners, and gate of salvation for every one. He then procured in Rome its incorporation into the Arch-Confraternity, and in order to make the establishing of the Confraternity as solemn as possible, he issued a pastoral letter on this occasion. Full of paternal love and touching unction, he explained to his beloved flock the excellency of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He pointed out its aptitude to revive faith in those days of lukewarmness and apostasy. He perceives in this Devotion the best, yes, as it were, the necessary, means to arouse the spirit of true piety, which consists in the Love of Jesus, our Lord and Redeemer. Then he goes on to explain, in a strict Catholic sense, in what consists especially the essential part of this Devotion, touching the great mysteries of the Life and Passion of our Redeemer. He describes its sublime purpose, its truly admirable propagation and most excellent fruits, and gives finally a decided and easy way by which to cultivate this

Devotion amongst the truest and surest—a child-like veneration and devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as the most faithful imitation of the Heart of Jesus. In short, he endeavoured in this letter with all the force of sublime eloquence to inflame all, and encourages his beloved flock to embrace joyfully such a loving Devotion, and to establish and propagate it as much as possible, at least in all the principal churches of the parishes, and in all religious houses, that all might live in and for the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Thus he incited the faithful by his words, but far more by his own example. Before the solemn opening of the Confraternity he instituted a three days' devotion, during which he himself gave suitable instructions to the clergy and people. On the day of the Feast itself he was present at all the exercises of Divine worship, to the great edification of all, frequently distributed Holy Communion among the devout faithful, who pressed to the altar rails in great numbers, and after he himself had made the preliminary discourse and celebrated High Mass, he closed the grand solemnity of the day by bestowing the threefold Benediction of the most Holy Sacrament. All this is taken from the most authentic account, which is kept in the Arch-Confraternity of the Sacred Heart in Rome, and in an auto-

graph letter of the illustrious Prince of the Church himself, wherein he testifies that 'this day belonged to the most beautiful reminiscences of his life.'

II. A Jansenistic Mother led to the Heart of Jesus.

It is now well known that the Venerable Sophie Barat was the foundress of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, but it is not so generally known how she became inspired with that love and devotion to the Sacred Heart which she endeavoured to promote to the best of her power in her congregation. It was through her mother. The history of her life relates that the Barat family was formerly imbued with heretical principles, and that during the childhood of the venerable foundress a great aversion to the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, so dear to all Catholics, prevailed amongst them. In 1793 Sophie's brother Lewis, who was studying for the priesthood, was imprisoned by the Revolutionary party. Shortly before his arrest he had sent two very beautiful pictures of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary to his mother, to whom all that came from her beloved child was doubly dear, and who, forgetting the old family prejudice, received the pious legacies with evident joy. Notwithstanding the ill-will of her sister, who was stubborn in her Jansenistic principles, Madam Barat had

the pictures framed and hung in a conspicuous place, where they always remained, in spite of the frequent searchings to which the house was subjected. During the whole of this dreadful year, mother and daughter were to be seen praying before these pictures for the release of their beloved prisoner, and it is to this pious practice Sophie Barat attributed the beginning of her love and veneration for the Sacred Heart.

12. A Bride of the Sacred Heart.

As we have been relating a few facts connected with Devotion to the Sacred Heart, we think it may interest our readers if we conclude this portion of our little work with an account of the death of a religious of the Sacred Heart, which is touching in its simplicity.

Like a dark cloud overshadowing a beautiful landscape on an autumnal day was the angel of death spreading his wings over a large house in the neighbourhood of Paris, in which formerly only spiritual joy and heavenly peace had shone in the faces of the happy virgins who lived there. A young nun lay on her death-bed in the convent of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart at Conflans. A priest acquainted with the community had just made them an encouraging exhortation, and concluded it with these words :

'I will not leave you, dear Sisters, without telling you of the consoling interview I have had with your revered Sister. She is approaching her end, and how great a consolation it is for her to die in her vocation! Her joy and peace are inexpressible. She already seems to be partly in heaven and to see Jesus and Mary and the angels and saints in anticipation. She rejoices at the thought of entering her heavenly home, in order to discharge all her debts to those she leaves on earth, and to pray with a grateful heart for the congregation in which she has lived so happily, and in which she is so soon to die.'

In these few words did the priest describe the state of the young religious Louise Mallac's soul. This innocent virgin, adorned with rare gifts of mind and body, like a tropical flower transplanted in foreign soil, had for a long time been withering away, and was joyously conscious that the days of her exile were numbered. She who was consecrated to God had overcome all natural timidity through the help of Divine grace; death appeared to her in the supernatural light of faith as the entrance to eternal life, the only object of her desires, and as the happy end of her earthly pilgrimage. To a religious expressing her sympathy to see her suffering, Louise replied:

'Ah, is it not just that I should suffer now, for

a little while? I was so happy at home, still happier, happy beyond all description, in my second home, in the convent, in the Society of the Sacred Heart, and now—I am going to heaven.'

Although the illness had not yet attained its highest point, it was to be feared that one of the oft-recurring attacks would suddenly deprive the community of its beloved member, therefore the nuns rightly determined she should receive the last Sacraments on December 3, the Feast of St. Francis Xavier. This news was received with transports of joy by the pious spouse of Christ. Her lively faith enabled her to understand the greatness of this action, and so she endeavoured to prepare herself for it to the best of her ability. Entirely occupied with pious thoughts and filled with longing desires, she repeated with inexpressible joy:

'I feel just the same as on the happiest days of my life, the eves of my first Communion and holy Profession.'

Before receiving Holy Viaticum she begged pardon, in an audible voice, of all the Sisters who had accompanied the Blessed Sacrament with lighted candles to her cell, for the bad example which in her humility she thought she had given, and then she renewed her holy vows.

After receiving Extreme Unction, her face shone with joy, and she cried out:

'I am filled with delight. Oh! what grace this Sacrament bestows! one must have received it in order to understand me. It is a foretaste of heaven! You may conceive, my dear Sisters, what I feel at the thought of awaking to see my God, and of the eternal union with Jesus Christ our Saviour!'

She desired them to sing the *Te Deum* and the *Magnificat*. As it so often happens, so it did on this occasion, Extreme Unction was the means not only of spiritual, but also of bodily alleviation! A decided improvement took place, and although her sufferings were frequent, her life was prolonged till January 22 of the following year.

This time, although of great suffering, was one of much grace for the dying nun, for her heroic patience and resignation led her ever closer to her God; and if, as we believe, that by one act of perfect love a soul wings its flight direct to heaven, it may be believed that her long and painful illness was, so to speak, a continual act of perfect love, and earned for this pure soul a speedy entrance to her heavenly home. When someone asked her, 'Do you not fear Purgatory? do you think you will go there?' she smilingly replied:

'I deserve it, but I trust in God's mercy to be preserved from it.'

Another time she related how in her sleepless hours she recreated herself by thinking of her burial. She once said:

'In a light slumber I thought I saw our Lord strewing a quantity of little flowers on my bed. I easily understood that the flowers signified sufferings.'

Like a sweet spice which exhales its sweetest perfume when burnt so did Louise spread around her the stronger perfume of virtue as she approached her end. The joy which filled her heart overflowed into the hearts of her Sisters who surrounded her dying bed. But death came at last. She had constantly said, 'I have nothing, nothing at all, which disturbs or troubles me.'

'Oh, what a great grace to be purified in the Blood of Jesus!' she exclaimed after receiving Sacramental Absolution. At eleven o'clock the Sister who was nursing her said:

'Thank God, you are nearer the goal.'

'Yes,' answered Louise, 'but some hours still remain.'

But in this she was mistaken. By the shortness of her breathing it was evident her death agony would soon be over. The Sisters were all praying around her bed. At the first sound of

the Angelical Salutation, Louise attempted to raise herself a little ; this announced the last moment had come. She lovingly kissed the crucifix presented to her, and when the prayers were interrupted for a moment, she cried out :

‘ Mon Dieu ! mon Dieu ! mon Dieu !’

These were her last words ; her head sank back, she heaved three sighs, and all was over. Joyfully and peacefully had she given up her soul into the Hands of her Creator.

III.

COUNTRIES AND TOWNS DEDICATED TO THE SACRED HEART.

i. A Page from Tyrolese History.

HE Divine Heart of Jesus has manifested itself as a sign by which we shall conquer. It is the true sign of victory in the battles which await us. How, then, came it to pass that in poor little Tyrol, perhaps the most insignificant land among the far-spread and beautiful countries of Germany, this sublime standard was raised with such confidence? How is it, I repeat, that the Tyrol dares to proclaim to the German nation, which surpasses it considerably in wealth and power, 'In hoc signo vinces'—'In this sign thou shalt conquer'? Whosoever studies history in order to trace the ways of God will soon be convinced that in the history of peoples as well as in the lives of men there has ever been a law of highest logic in 'remuneration'

—a law of reward, or of punishment and mishap, ruling over all.

The Tyrolese consecrated themselves to the Sacred Heart in troublesome times, and it is in this consecration that they have found protection in the greatest difficulties, and remained faithful to the Church to this day. The Tyrolese contracted this engagement not by a mere ecclesiastical spread of Devotion to the Sacred Heart, but they bound themselves irrevocably to this Divine Seat of Mercy by a representative of their public laws, thus making it, as it were, a political as well as a religious act.

Thus, the Sacred Heart has become the symbol of Tyrolese history. In Its strength we read the explanation of the many wonderful successes of the poor mountain people against their most powerful foes. From It likewise flows that spirit which animates them to fight for Catholic unity.

When the French Revolution broke through all barriers, and the Republican armies spread themselves unrestrainedly over the neighbouring countries, the Tyrol, after a peaceful century, was suddenly threatened by the greatest danger from its enemies. The four cantons consulted how best to defend their liberty, and, recognising the insufficiency of human aid, they consecrated their country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the May

of 1796, and vowed to celebrate Its Feast with solemnity. This year passed under the special protection of God, the enemy not having achieved any of its intended invasions against that country; and by the victories of the Austrians in Italy and Germany, it gained time to prepare itself for further attacks. But the following year was one of severe trial. Sickness and drought visited the land. Mantua, the strongest bulwark of Italy, which had hitherto resisted the enemy, was forced to surrender, and the French fell with great strength on the allies of the Imperial army. Like the surrounding countries, the Tyrol was overrun with these troops, and the weak Austrian forces were obliged to surrender, and to sign a treaty with the enemy, which had already installed itself in Brixen, as likewise in the very heart of the country.

The majority, however, took courage, trusting in the protection of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. War being declared, troops were levied. From the depths of every valley, from the heights of every mountain and crag, they were to attack the foe on an appointed plain, and there to annihilate them. But God willed that the country should not be saved by human wisdom and clever precautions. Violent snowdrifts on the mountain

passes prevented the troops meeting at the appointed time. A weak Tyrolese division, weary with marching, had to sustain alone the superiority of the attacking forces. On April 2, 1797, they fought hand to hand throughout the whole day with unexampled animosity. Towards evening both parties withdrew, considering the battle as lost, thus proving how serious it had been. The courage of the French troops failing, owing to their severe losses, they withdrew secretly and quickly, but were hotly pursued through the valley.

However, still heavier trials were in store for them. Before the unfortunate campaign of 1805, Tyrol was given over to Bavaria, France's ally. Patiently it bore the foreign yoke, together with the destruction of the old constitutions of four centuries' standing, the abolition of customary privileges, the introduction of a bureaucratic Government, scorn, extortions, and ill-usage of every kind. To all they only opposed fervent prayer.

But when the 'enlightened Government' at Munich, over-bold and indiscreet, violated their pious traditions, disregarded the claims of the Church, and openly announced its intention to extirpate the old and venerable Tyrolese kingdom by the very roots, then the anger of God inflamed

the hearts of the humble peasants. Tyrol survived the year 1809, despite its battles and sufferings, and the diminution of its political importance. In this remarkable war the Sacred Heart of Jesus was the battle-cry and the shield of the brave Tyrolese, and the spectacle which had before disgraced Europe was again witnessed, in the French troops, attacked in open field of battle, being forced to surrender to the simple peasants of the invaded country.

Old men vigorous as youths were present at these encounters, and relate how before the first attack Hofer hesitated to give the signal to advance, because the discreet members of the council desired to await the arrival of the people of Oberinnthal, whilst the more impetuous wished for an immediate attack. During the course of an animated discussion an unknown peasant of a very unearthly appearance pressed into the assembly, and in a peculiarly solemn voice said:

‘In the name of God and our Lady, I command you to attack the enemy on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, the day after to-morrow, May 29, and I foretell that you will be victorious.’

Then this extraordinary old man withdrew, and no one remembered seeing him again.

The captains of the assailants were of one mind, and, obeying this stranger’s injunction,

they gained a decisive victory on May 29 and 30, and expelled the hostile troops from the country with the loss of three thousand men. Several other victories were gained, but at length much trouble fell on the poor Tyrol. It was dismembered and torn, its truest and noblest sons were executed. The pious hero, Andrew Hofer, suffered death under the walls of Mantua. Invoking the help of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, this noble son of the Tyrol had been shot with bullets, sealing the holy and important testament with his life's blood.

We cannot doubt that our Lord's Divine Heart received the sacrifice and heard the prayers of this brave hero and his fellow-sufferers, for It has wonderfully sustained the Tyrolese in their faith, and in the pious practices of their forefathers. After ten years of severe trials endured under heretical governments, this simple people returned pure and uninjured to live under the mild rule of the House of Hapsburg. Thus was their desire fulfilled of living under the gentle sway of their hereditary princes, whom they had for centuries honoured as the protectors of the faith.

A long period of peace ensued. The conqueror before whom the world had trembled had fallen. God had withdrawn the scourge, and wished to allow the peoples of Europe to enter into them-

selves, and to acknowledge Him alone as their Sovereign Lord and Master.

But the tranquillity which followed these troubled times was not the fruit of true peace. It was but the consequence of morbid exhaustion. Under the smooth surface, under this bright exterior, still gnawed the deadly worm. The Revolution had abated, only to break out again with renewed vigour. By the inconceivable blindness of the Government, the nation had for centuries been trained in principles antagonistic to Church and State.

The masonic and Jewish literature and immoral newspapers greatly tended to sow the destructive seed of irreligion in the hearts of the young, and to poison the minds of all classes, from whom the opportunities of scientific education were removed. The baneful influence of these tenets was too soon visible. The modern code of constitutions, with its deceitfulness and intrigue, began its course throughout Europe, and so universal was the illusion that no nation realized the injuries inflicted by the exigency of these times.

Austria long withstood the so-called spirit of the age, but its old institutions of constitutional society were weakened and despised, and, by the influx of revolutionary principles, its foundations were sensibly shaken in the year 1848.

But if Austria greatly erred in this respect, and had to atone for her folly, on the other hand much praise is due to the personal efforts of the late Emperors Ferdinand and Francis, who recognised the immense benefit afforded to the Tyrolese by their unity of faith, which preserved them from heresy and shielded them from traitorous subjects. If misfortunes sometimes followed on the track of defeats, nevertheless this noble and truly Catholic spirit was most strikingly rewarded.

In the fatal spring of 1848 the revolutionary flame blazed forth in many Austrian provinces. Civil war was proclaimed in the east. A treacherous foe had invaded its Italian possessions in the south, and oppressed to the utmost the small and only disciplined army which the Emperor possessed. He himself had become a fugitive, and was obliged to leave the rebellious capital.

Then it was that the Tyrolese took courage, and, solemnly renewing their sacred confederation with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, full of confidence, they took up arms to protect the surviving wing of the Austrian army in Italy, and to offer an asylum to their Lord and Emperor. Who can say what would have befallen Austria if in the Tyrol the ancient character of its people had been destroyed, its religious and dynastic traditions

uprooted, and the country so debased, that, like the other Austrian provinces held captive by the blind fury of the Revolution, it had employed its military strength in the work of destruction?

Tyrol remembers with pride the gratitude of the veteran Radetski, who, unlike those who succeeded him, knew how to appreciate the greatness of the service rendered.

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When, after the defeat in Italy, the Emperor Francis Joseph, forsaken by all, came to know that his own subjects were his best allies, and wished to do them justice by the Diploma of October 20, 1860, a new period commenced for Austria, and consequently for the Tyrol—a period of incessant political struggles and of public life. As the Bureaucratics and authorities entrusted with the carrying out of the Imperial plans were incompetent, the Socialists, having gained the ascendancy, throwing off the mask, tried to regain the position they had forfeited as Bureaucrats by adopting the more modern method of parliamentism. Space will not allow us, nor is it the purpose of this little book, to enter into the history of Austria at this period. We must confine our attention to the Tyrol, and only mention the most salient points connected therewith. After a long interregnum the newly-elected

members of the Legislative Council assembled at Innsbrück at the end of March, 1861.

The eyes of the entire country were turned on this meeting, for atheism had but too clearly pointed out the drift of its demands to the members. All other interests were forgotten in the presence of this one great question: ‘Will the country be shielded and saved from the spirit of the age, and keep intact the faith of its forefathers, and remain a true child of Holy Church?’

On this condition alone had the deputies been chosen, and this request of the Tyrolese was placed before the assembled Parliament in an address signed by more than one hundred thousand men, as had formerly been done in 1848.

They had every reason to hope that their expectations would be realized, for they firmly believed that a law could only be made in the usual way, and they placed entire trust in the Parliament. It was therefore like a thunderbolt falling upon them when the Patent of April, 1861, was issued, which declared the Tyrol to be a *paritätisches* land, *i.e.*, a land of equality, and guaranteed to all non-Catholics who desired to settle down in that country the full enjoyment of all rights and privileges.

The impression this made was overwhelming. A cry of pain and indignation rang through the

length and breadth of the land. But the more afflicted and distressed the well-disposed party was, so much the more insolent and overbearing became their adversaries, who imagined they had already attained the state of religious indifferentism which they desired. The Parliament, true to duty, unanimously resolved to lay a Bill before the Emperor for his sanction in which the Patent of April 8 was completely ignored, and thus to guarantee sufficiently the religious unity of the Tyrol by the protection of the law.

The country folk showed their gratitude by burning innumerable bonfires on the mountains. The pious instincts of the people were conspicuous on this occasion. Distant and difficult pilgrimages were made with indescribable fervour in order to maintain unity of faith, and thus was the earnest expression of the heart's desire of the people evinced. There was not a valley nor a parish which had not taken part in these processions. The Feast of the Sacred Heart was also kept by the whole population with the most touching solemnity. But God willed that His faithful people should be still further tried, and the fear of those who had followed up the affair from the beginning was now realized, *i.e.*, the perfection of the petition made by the Tyrolese Parliament, owing, so it is said, to a flaw in the

formula. Parliament did not reassemble, but it was necessary that some measures should be adopted. With this view forty or fifty influential members assembled from all parts of the Tyrol in order to debate what ought to be done. Their decisions were earnest and dignified, and were loudly echoed throughout the land; one petition especially, on account of its success, will ever be remembered and hold a prominent place in Tyrolese history. This was an address to the Pope, in which they represented to His Holiness the distress of Catholic Tyrol, and besought him to intercede for, and to bestow a blessing on, this faithful daughter of Holy Church. The Pope not only vouchsafed to grant this request, but in a letter addressed to the Tyrolese bishops His Holiness solemnly blessed their country, and acknowledged emphatically and decidedly its full right to adhere to its 'most just claims' regarding the religious unity demanded by the Government.

It is not our intention to discuss the disturbance created among the Socialists by this letter, so we will only state the fact that every measure was taken to provoke the people, in order that, should their patience fail, cause would be given to complain of the country, and so oblige the Government to adopt more stringent measures.

The people kept their patience well under

control, for they were so impressed by the importance of the mission they had to fulfil that they restrained their feelings, and whenever they appeared their manners were so dignified that their adversaries never had the slightest cause for the least reproach, and were completely silenced. For instance, on October 20, 1861, more than nine hundred men from the neighbouring mountains made a pilgrimage to the town of Bugen, carrying in solemn procession a miraculous picture of the Mother of God. Quietly and earnestly they went and returned. The fervour and unity evinced by the people on this occasion were unbearable to the atheists of Bugen, and so they on their part planned a demonstration in honour of April 8, the day on which the Patent had been issued, and in this way again they strove to destroy religious unity.

They made use of the people's passion for the pastime of target shooting to induce the peasants to be present at their display, at which the Tricolour flag was hoisted, and the Tyrolese ensign was entirely placed in the background. This was too much for the pious people to endure. The chief marksman of the whole country returned the invitation with scorn, and assembled his compatriots under the Papal and Tyrolese flags for the never-to-be-forgotten target shooting at

Lana. Not a single peasant carried his gun to Bugen, but days of most enthusiastic popular joy were maintained at Lana. This in itself was very significant.

Not only marksmen from all parts of the Tyrol, but likewise all religiously disposed men, came in crowds to Lana, and on the third day of the festivities the ancient covenant with the Sacred Heart of Jesus was solemnly renewed. It was a religious festival of the most unique kind. In the church, near the altar, hung the flag of Andrew Hofer, riddled by bullets, and the kneeling crowd consisted entirely of weather-beaten veterans, accustomed to the dangers and the hardships of war. With tearful voices they besought the Sacred Heart to remember their ancient covenant, and to protect their beloved fatherland from the greatest of misfortunes, viz., heresy and apostasy.

That which gave an especially grand signification to this memorable target-shooting at Lana was that a Council was held there under the auspices of the late well-known President of Catholic Meetings in Germany, at which many hundred magnates, distinguished priests and influential men were present. The resolutions of the previous meeting at Innsbrück were renewed. The foundation and advancement of religious journals were

resolved upon. The best and noblest men of the country shook hands, and solemnly promised, under the protection of the Sacred Heart, to persevere to the end, and never to grow weary until the precious jewel of Tyrol, the 'Unity of Catholic Faith,' had been lawfully restored to them.

The state of the Catholic Church in countries where all religions are equally tolerated is, we well know, one of earnest struggle. But if we consider this struggle more closely, we shall see that it is directed not so much against the gradual extinction of Protestantism as against the revolution and between Church and State. No doubt the day will dawn when this revolution will pass from a religious to a political sphere, and create therein a fearful havoc. But are the children of darkness wiser in this matter than the children of light? Perhaps those who have so violently intruded themselves into the Tyrol have also this day in view, and would wish to capture this fortress of Catholicism, and surrender it to the spirit of the age, to be razed to the ground.

What will be the ultimate result of so many disturbances and revolutions no human intelligence can foresee.

2. *The Town and Diocese of Amiens consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.*

Since the second half of the seventeenth century, when a dreadful pestilence devastated Picardy, Amiens has never been in such distress as it was in June and July, 1866. The cholera raged more fiercely even than in 1832 and 1849. Then it was confined to the poorer districts, and claimed its victims from the humbler classes only. This year it devastated the whole town, sparing no class of society. Each day long lists of deaths were registered, the number one day amounting to eighty. The clergy and religious orders suffered many bereavements. One secular priest, one Lazarist, two Franciscans, one Seminarist, eight Sisters of Charity, one Sister of Hope, five Ladies of the Sacred Heart, four Poor Clares, three Salesian Nuns, two religious of the Congregation of Lubencres, two Christian Brothers were among the victims whom the Church and the poor of Amiens greatly lamented.

Upon the first intelligence of the outbreak of the epidemic, the Bishop, Monsignor Boudinet, who was absent at the time, hastened to return, in order, by his paternal presence, to instil courage and confidence into the hearts of his oppressed flock. Public prayers were at once ordered, and a

(rogation) procession was organized for July 1, in which persons of the highest rank took part. But Divine Justice was not disarmed thereby. The cholera, indeed, abated for awhile, but soon broke out with renewed vigour.

Amiens presented a sad spectacle, closely resembling that city mentioned in Holy Scripture, for 'she lay in the shadow of death.' No vehicles were seen in the thoroughfares, excepting the doctors' carriages and hearses. No one was to be seen in the streets, save priests hastening to the sick and dying. The shops and warehouses were closed. The impress of terror and mourning was stamped everywhere. Thus was a town which had recently displayed much active life and business brought to the verge of the tomb. Consider also the sufferings, anxieties, and helplessness of the citizens. Human help was of no avail. God alone could render assistance. This the people fully realized, and, warned by a pastoral letter from the Bishop, they all assembled in the cathedral on the tenth Sunday after Pentecost. Here a scene was enacted which the town of Amiens had not witnessed for a century. Not content with coming to the assistance of his afflicted children in his own person, the chief Pastor wished on this occasion to give them a special proof of his zeal and care in their

behalf. Desirous of offering them a means of safety and health, the efficacy of which he never doubted, the Bishop intended dedicating the town and diocese, by a solemn and public act of consecration, to the powerful and all-merciful Heart of Jesus.

The previous Sunday Monsignor Boudinet had, during Holy Mass, made a vow to this effect, and now the hour of its fulfilment had arrived. Although in the morning of July 29 there were some persons unacquainted with the Bishop's intention, it was with difficulty the cathedral was to be reached at the appointed hour, so great was the concourse of people which filled the streets leading thereto. From whence came this vast gathering, since so many inhabitants had either left the town or fallen victims to the disease? Was the past but a dream, or had the dead arisen? These questions were soon answered by the mourning apparel visible on all sides, and the expression of mute grief depicted on every face, which said but too forcibly that the past was a reality, and that the hour of resurrection had not yet arrived.

At five o'clock the procession wended its way from the choir to the great nave of the cathedral. A great number of priests, clothed in sacred vestments and carrying lighted tapers, preceded

the most Holy Sacrament. Seculars, Regulars, Jesuits, Franciscans, Parish Priests, Chaplains were all assembled here for prayer, as they had been in helping and relieving one another at the sick-beds and graves of the dying and dead. The Jesuits, for instance, held a most dangerous post in the great hospital of the town. They had replaced its two Chaplains, one of whom, in his thirst for suffering and hardships, had fallen a victim to his heroic charity.

The Franciscans, imbued with the spirit of self-renunciation peculiar to their order, had placed themselves at the disposal of the Chaplain attached to the church in the cemetery of St. Mary Magdalen. The Lazarist Fathers devoted their time to the care of souls in the hospital of St. Charles, and assisted the priests at St. Anne's, where death had already reaped a rich harvest. The ranks of the curés were likewise considerably thinned by sickness and death, whilst the unmistakable marks of fatigue on the faces of those who formed the procession proclaimed the immense labours they had undertaken in the service of the sick.

The Bishop carried the Blessed Sacrament under a canopy, accompanied on either side by the members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, carrying lighted candles. It would be im-

possible to describe the feeling which possessed every breast as the procession passed through the kneeling throng, from whose hearts the psalm ‘Miserere’ and the ‘Parce nobis, Domine,’ resounded with appealing earnestness. Likewise equally impossible it would be to depict the faces aglow with devotion as they gazed on their hidden God. ‘No,’ said a man who did not practise his religion, ‘never have I witnessed anything of the kind; even *I* was forced to weep.’ After the procession had wended its way round the cathedral, and had returned to the sanctuary, the Vicar-General read a pastoral letter from the Bishop in reference to the epidemic, and to the present solemnity in particular.

At its conclusion the venerable Prelate himself ascended the pulpit. In spite of weakness, occasioned by illness and his many austerities, his Lordship’s voice was distinctly heard throughout the vast edifice. What a thrilling discourse! Truly it was the holy effusion of a deeply-afflicted but trustful heart—the heart of a Bishop and of a Father then addressed the audience, his dearly beloved children in Christ. All were deeply touched. They were unable to restrain their tears when his Lordship, in a trembling voice, uttered these words: “‘A good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.’” Yes, I give my

life. How often have I not already offered it in sacrifice! Oh, how happy would I be if God accepted my offering and spared my flock! I am sixty years of age, an old man, my strength is forsaking me, and no longer sufficient to cope with my zeal for your salvation. Why should I live any longer? You, dearly-beloved children, shall live, but God may take the life of your Bishop. How sweet it would be to die to save my flock!'

Tears and sobs were the only answer to this impassioned address. How could it be otherwise! Then, surrounded by the weeping multitude, the venerable Prelate read the solemn act of consecration as follows: 'I, Jacob Antonius, Bishop of Amiens, penetrated with grief for the sufferings of my people, I myself weighed down with the suffering they have endured for the past few months, and which I now desire to avert by the price of my own life, with the most heartfelt longing to preserve the surviving portion of my flock from similar sufferings, and to obtain a termination, or at least an alleviation, of the misery of my much-beloved town of Amiens, on my knees, in presence of the Most Holy Virgin Mary and all the angels and saints of God, consecrate this diocese, my priests, and myself to the Divine Heart of Jesus. May this Sacred Heart,

the source of mercy, come to our aid, protect and free us. To It be consecrated our thanks, adoration, and love for time and eternity. Amen.' In order to ratify this solemn oblation, the people sang thrice, 'Cor Jesu sacratissimum, miserere nobis'—'Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.' Benediction was then given, and the congregation chanted the supplication, 'Parce nobis, Domine'—'Spare us, O Lord.'

Thus ended this noble act of faith, hope, and love. May the remembrance thereof be indelibly impressed on all hearts!

3. A Miracle wrought by the Sacred Heart of Jesus at Marseilles.

In the year 1720 the plague broke out at Marseilles. All who were able, both rich and poor, left the city, which was then closed in order to prevent the epidemic spreading. The Bishop, Henri de Belzunce, had been urged to flee, but he turned a deaf ear to these entreaties, preferring to remain in order to sustain and cheer his suffering flock.

For months thousands fell victims to the plague. The dead could with difficulty be buried, and lay among the dying in the streets and squares. Already two hundred and fifty of the clergy had

succumbed as martyrs of charity, but in no wise daunted thereby, the Bishop and his priests went wherever they were needed, appearing as ministering angels, taking the last consolations of religion to the dying.

Divine service was suspended, and the church bells were silent for more than four months. At last the Bishop was inspired to consecrate the diocese to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The bells pealed forth once more, and the Pastor, clad in garments of penance and barefoot, betook himself with his clergy and flock in procession to a square where an altar had been erected. Before offering the Holy Sacrifice the Bishop read in a loud voice a prayer for pardon and the act of consecration to the Divine Heart of Jesus. From that hour the plague decreased, and in a short time entirely ceased.

The Pope Clement XI., was so struck with admiration at the heroic conduct of the good Bishop Belzunce, that he sent him from the funds of the Church two thousand bushels of corn to relieve his distressed people. Of the three ships thus loaded, one was shipwrecked, and the other two taken by African corsairs. But when these barbarians heard for what use the corn was intended, they were seized with remorse, and sent the cargo to Marseilles. In gratitude for all the

mercies shown to them, the Marseillaises annually renew this act of consecration to the Sacred Heart.

4. Ecuador consecrated to the Sacred Heart.

In 1873 the South American Republic of Ecuador had, by the persuasion of its great and pious President, Garcia Moreno, publicly and solemnly consecrated itself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Two years later Garcia Moreno fell under the dagger of an assassin. When dying, he had said to his friends :

‘Courage! God never dies !’

His prophecy is fulfilled. After many years of disturbance, dissensions, and persecution, the Conservatives once more gained the ascendancy. One of the first transactions of the new Government was the issue of the following decree :

‘THE PROVISORY GOVERNMENT OF ECUADOR.

‘In consideration of the triumph just attained, and in which the country glories, and publicly to acknowledge the all-powerful protection of God, it considers it a duty to erect in His honour an imperishable memorial of the gratitude of the people of Ecuador. Therefore it has drawn up the following articles :

‘*Art. 1. At the cost of the State, and with the*

help of voluntary donations, a magnificent church will be built and dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to which the Republic has already in a special manner been consecrated.

'Art. 2. The church will be built in the centre of the capital on the site decided upon by the majority of votes.

'Art. 3. On August 10, 1884, the anniversary of the Declaration of the Independence of the Republic of Ecuador, the foundation stone will be solemnly laid.

'Given at Quito, Capital of the Republic,
July 23, 1883.

'LOUIS CORDERO.

'AUGUSTIN GUERRERO.

'RAFAEL PEREZ PARIJA.

'PABLO FERRERA.

'J. MODESTO ESPINOSA,

'Home Minister.'

5. *Devotion to the Sacred Heart in China.*

On December 8, 1863, the foundation stone of the second church dedicated to the Sacred Heart in China was laid at Canton. 'Bishop William' thus describes the ceremony :

'On October 2, 1849, at eleven o'clock at night, Father Lacunce and I arrived at Canton, in order to start a mission. After partaking of a frugal

meal, we erected a little altar on which to offer the Holy Sacrifice on the morrow. When all preparations were made, we placed a picture of the Sacred Heart above the altar.

'Missionaries had hitherto been much persecuted in China. Twice had we been obliged to leave Canton, but the above-mentioned picture had accompanied us in all our journeys. This time we were more successful, and an opportunity of building a church soon occurred. "To whom should it be dedicated?" The question was readily solved. "Should that picture of the Sacred Heart, which had consoled us in the days of hardship and poverty, now that times were brighter, be banished from our midst? No. The church must be dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

'It was a solemn moment when the foundation stone of this House of God was laid in the presence of more than a million natives, mostly heathens, and under the auspices of the highest dignitaries of the land.'

A most noteworthy fact, which did not escape the notice of our missionaries, was that in proportion as the building advanced visits from the best society increased; and, on the contrary, if the work was stopped, the love and veneration of the people towards us decreased.

Thus has this church already proved a real blessing. When it is completed, a life-size picture of the Sacred Heart will be placed over the high altar, in which our Lord will be pointing to His Divine Heart with one hand, and with the other receiving a chalice from an angel—the symbol of the most holy mysteries of His sufferings and of the Blessed Eucharist.

May this beautiful church, erected on the site where a heathen palace formerly stood, be to all as a sign of victory in order to lead a great many poor Chinese to the knowledge of God.

IV.

THE SACRED HEART OUR REFUGE IN DISTRESS AND TROUBLE.

I. Under the Protection of the Sacred Heart.

N a letter from Father Roman, a missionary of China, we have the following incident related :

‘On August 25, in the year 1735, I went to visit my flock, which, on account of the persecution raging throughout China, was very much scattered.

‘In the course of my journey, I had to cross the river Tun-Kiam. Through the mismanagement of the pilot the boat capsized, and I was in the greatest danger and on the point of sinking ; but, calling on the Sacred Heart for help, as I always did when in trouble, I felt endued with wonderful strength, which enabled me soon to reach the shore in safety—how, I cannot say.’

Father Roman then goes on to relate a second favour :

'Amongst the people who had gathered on the shore,' he writes, 'was a notorious persecutor of the Christians; but not recognising the priest, he took him for a merchant and went his way.'

Devotion to the Sacred Heart soon spread throughout China, and even in the imperial town of Pekin it now flourishes, especially in the Church of the Jesuits, where a conflagration at one time broke out, which was burning for eleven hours, yet, wonderful to say, the altar dedicated to the Sacred Heart was left untouched by the fire.

2. *A House in Danger saved through Prayer to the Sacred Heart.*

The terrible disaster which swept over South Tyrol and Pusterthal in the year 1882 is well known.

In the eastern part of Pusterthal, near the little town of Maria Hollbrück and opposite Maria Luggau, stands a pretty newly-built house, quite close to the banks of the river, which, in those disastrous months of September and October, flooded the surrounding country.

'A few weeks ago,' writes an eye-witness, 'I happened to be at this very place, and my eyes beheld a marvellous scene. The river had

reached to within a few yards of the house, forming a semicircle round it, making for itself a very deep channel and almost washing away the intervening ground, when suddenly it returned to its old bed, which was several yards from the house, keeping in a direct course without doing any further damage.

'My first words on seeing this were: "That house, together with its inhabitants, must have been under the special protection of God!"' Later the following circumstances were told to me.

'Whilst the men had been labouring hard both by day and night to save the house, which was in such peril, the mother and daughter, being unable to help, betook themselves to the Parish Church to beseech with many tears the loving Heart of their Sacramental Lord. They promised to make a Novena, and to publish the favour of their deliverance, if granted, in the *Messenger*, which had been read by the family for many years. And now the house stands a silent witness to future ages of the protection and blessing of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, in Whose praise and honour I write these lines, and the truth of which can be easily proved.'

3. Saved from Imminent Peril.

To the greater honour and glory of the Sacred Heart, I wish to relate the following miraculous escape of my dear father and sister :

'They had been on a pilgrimage, and were driving home by a road which lay close to a stone quarry, with large stones standing up in the middle of the street. These stones must have frightened the horse, for it shied and ran away, dragging the carriage first to the right, then to the left, in such a way that at every moment it seemed that the horse would either rush headlong over the precipice, or that the carriage would be dashed to pieces on one of the stones. Help seemed quite out of the question, for the people ran hither and thither in their fright, and the coachman became quite powerless, unable to control the horse, which was on the verge of falling over the precipice, when my father, with wonderful energy, seized the reins, the horse stood still, and in a few moments it became perfectly quiet. I attribute this escape to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for all the members of my family have a great Devotion to the Sacred Heart, and wear the Scapular, and also to the intercession of Mary, in whose honour the pilgrimage had been made. I myself have very often found help during

times of trial and difficulty in this most Divine Heart.

4. *The Miraculous Power of the Scapular of the Sacred Heart.*

In the year 1866, when the cholera was raging in Amiens, it had reached such a height that as many as one hundred and twenty deaths occurred in one day. Those who could left the town; but in spite of the precautions taken by the authorities, the plague spread far and wide. Our Sisters had already had two deaths and fifteen cases of sickness, when our Reverend Mother sent a small number of Scapulars of the Sacred Heart to be worn by her children as preservatives against the plague.

A lay Sister of the monastery showed her precious talisman, and immediately it became known throughout the town, everyone, high and low, men and women, flocked to the convent in order to beg for Scapulars. The Sisters vainly assured the distressed people they had no more, and at last the demand became so urgent that the good nuns gave away their own, undertaking to make and distribute as many more as was in their power. The priests of the town also came to beg some for their different parishes. All declared

that the very sight of this holy badge gave new hope to the despairing soul.

God did not allow the confidence of these good people to pass unrewarded. The sick on whom the Scapular was placed all recovered. Although during these days the heat increased, which caused the plague to rage more fearfully, the sickness suddenly lessened, and the number of deaths decreased from one hundred and twenty to twenty. This was too evident not to be attributed to the Sacred Heart. The gratitude and enthusiasm were so great that everyone begged and entreated the Bishop to consecrate the whole town to the Sacred Heart, by Whose mercy they had all been saved.

Amongst the men who had asked most earnestly for a Scapular was one who had not practised his religion for very many years. The lay Sister, who knew this, hesitated before granting his request, saying :

‘Sir, he who wears this Scapular must be at peace with God.’

‘I would rather,’ he answered, ‘promise to make my peace with God than not to have the Scapular;’ and he returned home, made quite happy by the possession of his treasure.

The cousin of one of our novices, a very pious Catholic young man, who was in the last great

war, fell into a ditch together with his horse, whilst he was defending himself against several Austrian Hussars, but they, thinking he was dead, left him. However, the young man, recovering consciousness, felt himself strong enough to travel several miles, which enabled him to reach the railway, and was thus happily brought back to his family. He had received as many as twelve wounds on his head, none of which proved fatal. His first thought was to attribute his miraculous escape to the loving protection of the Sacred Heart, Whose Scapular he wore, and in his gratitude he everywhere published the account of his deliverance.

5. *Two Lovers of the Sacred Heart rewarded.*

In a certain parish in Germany two priests had tried to instil a Devotion to the Sacred Heart into the souls of their flock. It so happened that last summer the parish priest fell ill, and the care of one thousand two hundred souls devolved on his curate. Soon, however, he also sickened, and the poor people were in great distress. But the precious fruit of a Devotion which the two priests had successfully implanted in the hearts of their children began to show itself. Four little girls who were preparing for their first Communion

resolved among themselves to make a Novena to the Sacred Heart, in order to obtain the recovery of their beloved pastors. Soon, others joined them in their pious purpose of interceding at the foot of the Altar. And the prayer of the children was at length heard. The curate was again able to sing High Mass and to preach, and the parish priest himself in a short time gained enough strength to be able to say Holy Mass.

Thus the instruction regarding Devotion to the Sacred Heart served to unite both priests and people in a bond of loving union.

The writer of this episode, though only a peasant, said that this incident recalled to his mind the words of our Divine Lord: 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.'

6. *The Sacred Heart of Jesus a Wonder-working Physician.*

A. E., a young peasant, twenty-five years of age, belonging to the little village of R—, in Bohemia, fell ill on the first Saturday of Lent, and all who saw him were prepared for the worst.

According to the doctor's report, the illness, which, he said, was a complication of diseases, had reached to such a pitch that all medical help

was of no avail. The sick man was given up both by the doctor and all who saw him. In their grief, the young peasant's betrothed and his mother, both devoted lovers of the Sacred Heart, begged with most earnest prayer for help. On the very first day of the illness they began a Novena to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and to St. Joseph; in a fortnight the young man was completely cured. But the Sacred Heart wished once more to show Its power and love. At the end of another fortnight, without any apparent cause, the poor man became again so seriously ill, that all hope was given up, everyone declaring that recovery would be impossible. But his pious mother and betrothed redoubled their prayers; they began a second Novena to the Sacred Heart, had Holy Mass offered for the recovery of the sick man, and he received Holy Communion for the same intention, praying more fervently than ever, and promising, if their petition were granted, to have the favour published in the *Messenger*. Very earnestly did the poor invalid pray also. One night at midnight his pains were so great that he felt he could not endure them any longer; he promised, if he recovered, to make a pilgrimage to Albendorf. At one and the same moment he thought he saw a beautiful lady bending over his bed and looking

at him ; the pain left him, and this time returned no more. The next day he was quite cured.

On Palm Sunday he approached the Sacraments in the church, thanking the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and St. Joseph, who had deigned to help him.

With grateful hearts let us also pray that, ‘The more infidelity strives to rob us of hope, the more will we trust in Thee, O Sacred Heart, the sole refuge of men.’

7. Two Instances of Confidence in the Sacred Heart rewarded.

On Low Sunday, 18—, a beautiful painting of the Sacred Heart, by Hellweger, was placed for the first time in the Parish Church of Vomp for public veneration. Devout souls and ardent lovers of the Sacred Heart had already brought many beautiful offerings, and people came on the first Sunday of the month to pay honour to the Sacred Heart. The prayers of all were offered in particular for their parish priest, who, having had a stroke for the third time this year, had been given up by the doctor, and was almost at the point of death. But in spite of his advanced age, he soon became well enough to say Mass, attributing his recovery to the Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and St. Joseph.

Again, at another time a fire broke out in the forest which forms part of this parish, without any apparent cause. It spread to eighteen farmhouses. Many firemen hastened to the spot, but water and the necessary appliances were wanting, the ground was very dry, and a high wind was blowing. The trees were cut down as quickly as possible, but all seemed useless. Whilst many were busy in the forest, the wind carried some sparks on the dry roof of a farmhouse a little distance off. The daughter of the house noticed these sparks, and going upstairs, found that the roof was already blazing. With great confidence she sought for help—not from men, but from the Sacred Heart. And behold! in spite of the wind, and without any external aid, the fire was extinguished. The owner of the house, in grateful thanksgiving, made renewed promises to the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, and on that very day, contrary to all expectation, the fire in the forest was also extinguished.

8. A Favour obtained on the Feast of the Sacred Heart in 1882.

The love of the Sacred Heart for our children was shown in such a wonderful way during the

Octave of this Feast that we hope the publication of the favour will tend to the greater honour and glory of this Adorable Heart.

One of our pupils was suffering from a very bad ulcer on the forehead, which became at last so dangerous that the poor child had to undergo three successive operations. In more serious cases of sickness, when human science was of no avail, the children always appealed with childlike confidence to Mary, and the reward of their trust was either relief or a perfect cure. But this time the Divine Friend of children wished Himself to answer their prayers, for neither the use of Lourdes water nor a Novena made in honour of Our Lady was of any avail. The child had been under medical treatment for nine weeks, and finally the doctors themselves seemed to give up hope.

The Feast of the Sacred Heart was approaching, for we were already in the month of June, and it seemed most natural that we should have recourse to the merciful Heart of Jesus.

Accordingly, on the 9th, a Novena was begun, our little invalid praying with the greatest confidence that she would be heard. And her trust was finally to be rewarded, but not before it had been sorely tried; for on the first day of the Novena the wound gave fresh cause for alarm.

On the Feast, however, it grew rapidly better. But on the following Sunday, what was our joy not only to see the wound closed, but also healed —a process which, naturally speaking, would have taken many days.

This answer to their prayers increased the ardent fervour and devotion of our little ones to the Sacred Heart. After this favour their daily ejaculation became, ‘Heart of Jesus, in Thee I place all my hope; let me never be confounded!’

9. A Child in Great Danger watched over by the Sacred Heart.

In the year 1872, on what is sometimes called ‘Portiuncula Sunday,’ a peasant set out from Oberonach, towards five o’clock in the evening, in order to go to the forest and survey the damage the recent heavy showers had wrought to the dyke. He took his little son with him, a child just three years old, and, putting him in what he considered to be a safe place, told him to stay there until he should return. The poor man soon came back, and not finding his child, he sought for him in the neighbouring woods, but his search was in vain.

With a heavy heart he returned home, in the hope of finding that his little son had run on before him, but there was no sign of him. His

friends helped him in his search, but all their labour was fruitless. In his distress, he went to the parish priest for advice, it being then 8 p.m. The good Father advised him to pray with great confidence, and begin a Novena to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, resolving himself to make a pilgrimage to Treus.

The people searched the whole neighbourhood with torches until 1 a.m., but were not successful in their endeavours. On Monday they tried again from morning till noon, but all in vain. Finally, all hope was given up, and the poor father became inconsolable.

A young peasant, when he heard of the failure, determined to have a Mass said in honour of St. Antony of Padua; almost immediately he had an inspiration to return to a place which had already been thoroughly searched. There he espied, on the very edge of a rock, first the foot of the child, then his whole body, and his little face covered by his hat. The man climbed up the rock very cautiously, so as not to startle the child. The joy of the father, and indeed of all, can well be imagined. It remained to the end, however, a mystery how it was that the child did not fall over the precipice, for very little could be gathered from his description, which was something like this:

'I did not like to stay alone with all those trees, so I followed father; but a bear came along, and I followed it, for it would not carry me. I saw many little lights shining' (probably the torches or the stars); but this was all he could tell them.

He was carried home quite safe and sound, only his little feet were cold and somewhat swollen; but this was very likely owing to the cold night, the child being very thinly clad. He has now quite revived. I attribute this miraculous protection to the merciful Heart of Jesus, and I am convinced more than ever that parents should never neglect to bless their children morning and night, and make them wear some token of Devotion, such as a blessed medal, a Scapular, etc.

10. *The Sacred Heart and the Savages.*

As a proof that the Sacred Heart has some chosen friends among the savage tribes of North America, Father Caruana, the Director of the Apostleship, relates the following incident:

A young woman who had been enrolled in the Apostleship fell dangerously ill, and was nigh unto death. The doctor, who understood the seriousness of the case, told Father Caruana that it was time for her to receive the Last Sacraments. 'I went,' writes the priest, 'and anointed

her, but did not give her Holy Viaticum, as she was unable to swallow anything. When I was leaving, the sick woman, with tears, asked me how I could desert her at such a moment, without giving her her Jesus for the last time, as the doctor had assured us she could not live till midnight.

"Very well," I said, "if your longing is really a true one, ask the Sacred Heart to let me see you alive in the morning." With great joy she agreed with my proposal. What was my surprise the following morning to see the sick woman in church, begging me to give her Holy Communion! And she continues in the enjoyment of good health.'

Truly the Sacred Heart of Jesus has Its friends even in these Rocky Mountains. 'May It be blessed and praised for ever and ever!'

II. The Sacred Heart and the Cholera.

Our readers will undoubtedly be interested in the contents of a letter written by a French Missioner in Hindostan to the Catholic editor of a French paper about the time when the cholera raged for so many months throughout Europe. It shows the great mercy of the Sacred Heart towards those in trouble, and in what a

wonderful way It has sent help in the impending cholera distress, through the intercession of Mary. We quote the extract word for word :

‘One day when I was just going out to make a sick-call two men hurried towards me.

““Father,” they said, “we are two Christians from Bayalogam.”

““From such a distance?” I answered. “Do you expect me to bring Extreme Unction to anyone?”

““Yes, Father—to the whole of our village.”

““To the whole village?” I exclaimed.

““Yes, Father; read this.” They gave me a palm-leaf, on which was written :

““The Christians of Bayalogam, humbly kneeling at your feet, entreat your Reverence to hasten to their assistance. The cholera knocks at our doors. There are at this moment three neighbouring pagan villages smitten with the disease. Do not abandon your flock, Reverend Father, but come and say Mass, hear our confessions, and we shall be saved.”

““My friends,” I said, “do you not see that our Divine Saviour and His Blessed Mother have already helped you, for no one in your village is stricken with the terrible plague? Bayalogam is so far away that I should have to travel a whole week before reaching it. As long as you are all

well, I must stay here, ready to attend to any serious case. If the cholera spares you, I must not leave my post here."

"Then, Father, if you cannot come with us, tell us at least what to do."

"As I cannot come to you in person, I give you this picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which, although it cannot give the Last Sacraments, is able to impart greater help than I could give. I remember once the cholera had reached such a height in one of the large towns of my own country that one hundred and twenty deaths occurred daily. But from the day the Bishop made a vow to the Sacred Heart the ravages of the plague grew less fearful. So do you also seek refuge in this most Adorable Heart. Take this picture, and carry it in procession round your village next Sunday. I am convinced that the few heathens amongst you will make no resistance."

"Oh no! On the contrary, they themselves begged us to hasten to you for help," was the reply.

"But this is not enough," I further remarked. "So long as the cholera rages around you, each day, morning and night, you must assemble in the church in as large numbers as possible and say the Litany of the Sacred Heart. See that no child is absent from this public Devotion. I lay

great stress on this especially. Do you understand?—all children should go to the church, even those who can hardly walk."

"But, Father, a great many of them cannot yet pray," they objected.

"That does not matter. They can beg the good God to avert all evil from the village. He will help them to pray, and will readily understand them. Besides, the very presence of innocent children at the foot of the Altar will be very pleasing to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He finds His delight with these little ones, who are not yet capable of sinning, and who have no part with those who wound His Divine Heart. Impress this fact also on the minds of adults—to be more careful not to offend the Sacred Heart at this time. Now go; do what I have told you, and this Divine Heart will help and protect you."

Two months later the Sacristan of the little church at Bayalogam came to see me.

"Well, Arulapen" (this was his name), "what has the cholera done?"

"It has disappeared, Reverend Father," he made answer.

"How many victims did it demand from among you?"

"Not one, but all the more in the neighbouring villages of Turks and heathens!"

“‘May the Sacred Heart be adored, thanked, and praised!’ I ejaculated simply.’

12. *A Mother's Ardent Desire fulfilled.*

My mother had been a widow for full seven years when I began my studies for the Priesthood at the age of fourteen. She had only a small business, and it cost her many efforts and privations to get together the necessary means in order that I might carry out my heart's desire. I had just left the Grammar School when she fell dangerously ill. Much more anxious was she on my account than on her own, as to whether I could still continue my studies, and her greatest anxiety was for me to attain to the priesthood.

‘If I can only live long enough,’ she said, ‘to see you a priest and receive your first blessing, I shall die happily. I have prayed daily and most fervently, and placed this intention in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.’

For my part, I did not cease praying that my sick mother might live until I could return to her a priest. Five years passed away, and my mother was brought to the gates of death; the doctors wondered that she did not die of exhaustion, but she always rallied. Finally her strength left her, and her death was daily expected. It was now

the end of May. Unless Almighty God heard our prayers, she could not possibly live to see her son a priest, for usually the Ordinations took place on June 29.

But our Lord did not allow the confidence of His children to pass unrewarded, for this year, owing to the weak health of the Archbishop, the Ordinations were advanced. On June 5, I hastened at once to the deathbed of my beloved mother, reaching home at six o'clock in the evening. Our relations and friends had already gathered round the sick-bed. My mother had lain for a long time unconscious, but when she heard my voice (I had given her my first blessing) she opened her eyes, and, looking at me, said in a scarcely audible voice :

'Oh, Franz, God has then heard our prayer even in the last hour. Let us thank the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.' Then, raising her hand, she blessed me for the last time and fell back exhausted.

I spoke to her words of courage and confidence, and read the prayers for the dying. At nine o'clock, just three hours after my arrival, my mother died. Hers was the first soul for whom I performed the last rites, which was indeed a hard task and a severe trial for me.

I ask all who read this if it was not a direct

answer to prayer through the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary?

13. How a Priest obtained a Happy and Peaceful Death.

In consequence of a serious operation, a poor priest fell dangerously ill, and perhaps the saddest part of the circumstances was that he had been delirious for many weeks, without showing any signs of consciousness during that time. The doctors said there was very little hope of a change for the better. We felt great compassion for one who, being so near death, was no longer able to receive the Sacraments. In our distress we prayed most earnestly to the Sacred Heart and made a Novena, on the second day of which the invalid recovered sufficient consciousness to make his confession. He then begged most earnestly to receive the Holy Viaticum, after which he prayed fervently, and with many tears, for a whole hour, saying he felt so peaceful and happy. When this hour so full of graces and blessings had passed the invalid became again unconscious, remaining in that state until his holy death, which occurred three days later.

14. A Priest in Distress.

A young priest belonging to a large parish in the South of Germany had, by rather a rash, or at least imprudent, act in a trifling matter, gained the ill-will of an influential number of his parishioners. So cleverly were certain calumnies brought against him both to the Government and his ecclesiastical superiors, that, humanly speaking, his reputation as well as his means of subsistence were at stake. His only hope was in the power of the Sacred Heart, and here he sought succour in the hour of his need, and promised, if he obtained help, to publish the favour in the *Messenger*, for God's greater honour and glory. A short time afterwards, that which seemed so impossible, judging from a human point of view, came to pass, and by the concurrence of certain circumstances the calumnies soon lost their power, and in the end turned on the slanderers themselves. The only remaining fear was that the labours of the priest would now prove of no avail in his parish, as it was natural to suppose a certain kind of ill-feeling might arise in the hearts of those whose plans had been frustrated. But instead of this, very soon the minds of the parishioners underwent such a complete change that in a short time all hostile feeling and antipathy towards the priest had disappeared.

'It is impossible,' he says himself, 'to attribute all this to natural causes;' but he begs that this little account may be published with his most heartfelt gratitude to the Sacred Heart, Who has deigned to help him in such a wonderful way.

15. *Unexpected Help.*

On April 27, 1868, a poor widow had to pay a certain sum of money to the Court, the penalty being, if it were not forthcoming on the said day that her goods would be seized. The poor creature had not a single farthing when the dreaded day was at hand, and no one would lend her the money. On the 26th she assisted at Holy Mass, and prayed most fervently during the Elevation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Who had never yet refused to take pity on her. And her prayer was not in vain; for on the forenoon of the very same day her little child happened by chance, as it seemed, to go to an old lumber-room of the house, and there found two pieces of paper, in which was wrapped just as much money as the widow wanted. It is worthy of notice that only the children ever entered this room, as the widow herself assured us; and if money had been there before, these little ones would in all probability have found it long ago. It was also proved that

none had entered the house who could have put the money in that place.

16 Justice obtained through Prayer.

A hospital having been opened at L——, in Lotharingen, under very poor circumstances, a generous doner bestowed the sum of 16,000 francs on its foundation.

But the Director having neglected a certain formality at the right time, the relations of the deceased benefactor demanded the money. A lawsuit was set on foot which, after much uncertainty, seemed to be at length so much in their favour that they began to speak as if certain of victory. The good Sisters who attended the hospital made a Novena, together with the poor, under the protection of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and also offered up many prayers for the benefit of the Holy Souls.

Sympathizing friends joined with them in these petitions. On the day that was to decide the case candles were burnt before the statue of the Sacred Heart, and so hopeless did the casue seem that they said they should think themselves fortunate if they could obtain by a compromise at least half the money for the benefit of their poor hospital. But the merciful Heart of Jesus was

not going to do Its work by half-measures. The advocate of the hospital committee, a Protestant but an upright man, pleaded the cause of the poor with such self-sacrifice and skill that he completely silenced his opponents, so that in the end the whole of the money was given over to the institution for which it was originally intended.

This unexpected issue gave much joy to all good people, and filled our Sisters with most grateful thanks towards the ever-merciful Heart of our Saviour, and with increased confidence in His goodness.

17. On the Threshold of the Priesthood,

From his earliest years a certain youth had felt himself called to the priesthood, and ardently desired to begin his studies; but the premature death of his father, and consequently the reduced circumstances of his family, completely prevented him from carrying out this one wish of his heart. To his great grief he had to give up the studies which he had already begun, and for many years he was obliged to attend to a business which was much against his inclinations, and which gave him neither rest nor quiet. Then our loving, merciful, and heavenly Father, Who had so early implanted a vocation in the heart of the boy,

looked down on him with pity and favour. He aroused in him once more the holy desire of being a priest, which had become dulled by hard necessity, and by the hurry and pressure of business. But how was this wish to be satisfied? for his age even presented another very weighty difficulty.

With the renewed longing Almighty God inspired him with the thought that he should appeal with great confidence to the Sacred Heart, and to this Heart alone, and that there he should obtain that which man was unable to bestow. The youth betook himself therefore, full of confidence, to the Sacred Heart, and received Holy Communion in these sentiments, and on that very day a friend was found who enabled him to begin his college studies, and thus prepare for the priesthood.

18. Obstacles overcome.

A young lady had for a long time felt a call to the religious life. When she first made it known to her parents, they poured out quite a flood of bitter words and reproaches on the poor child. They all declared, and even her mother threatened, that they would never go and see her, that they would do nothing for her. This was indeed a severe trial. The young girl was well-

nigh brought to despair, but the thought of the sweet Heart of Jesus, Who had so often helped her in former troubles, and confidence in the loving heart of Mary, gave her strength amid the many obstacles which stood in the way of her holy purpose. Novena followed Novena. When the young girl, with increased confidence, again represented to her mother very earnestly that it was her vocation to enter religion, and that God asked this sacrifice from herself and her parents, this time she obtained permission at once; her father also, after an illness with which God visited him, willingly gave his consent, and the daughter was now able with the blessing of both her parents to cross the threshold of the cloister, and to give a whole and undivided heart to her Divine Spouse.

When I think of the numerous difficulties and obstacles which stood in the way of this holy vocation, and when I see how happily and full of blessings everything has turned out, my heart is moved, and I would wish to proclaim with a thousand tongues throughout the world: 'Oh if all knew how sweet is the Heart of Jesus, they would indeed love It more and more !'

19. '*The Instruments are there.*'

An astronomer, wishing to be allowed to contribute his mite towards the honour of the Sacred Heart, sends us the following narration :

' We intended erecting an observatory in the part of America to which I belong, to be ready for December 6, in order to watch the transit of Venus. We had chosen the spot in good time, had decided on the necessary latitude and longitude, and had already built a massive pillar ; but the telescopes, which were being sent from Europe, had been delayed on the way, but at what place we did not even know.

' December was fast approaching, and, telegraphic messages proving useless, we betook ourselves to prayer. I began a Novena to the Sacred Heart for the Holy Souls, through the intercession of St Antony, said three Masses for this intention, and promised to publish the result in the *Messenger*, should the telescope arrive in time.

' On the evening of the second day of the Novena, I retired to rest with a moral certainty that the instruments would arrive the next morning, and resolved to drive very early to the railway-station, which was about three miles from us. Surprised at my feeling of success, I asked myself

if I were not giving way to superstition. But no the conviction was there, and I felt quite assured and happy. When I arrived at the station next morning, I was greeted by the station-master with the words, "The instruments are there." It then only wanted four days till the transit should take place. A day later, the observatory would not have been erected in time.

'Full of gratitude to the Sacred Heart, Who had so completely heard my prayer, I left the station with my precious package. In conclusion, I must add that our observatory did not serve its original purpose, for the sun became over-clouded seven minutes before the transit, and did not shine again until half an hour after the expected phenomenon. But that had not been the object of our prayer; our intention was only to do what was in the power of man, and it only remains for us to thank the Sacred Heart, Who heard our prayer in such a complete and unlooked-for manner.'

20. '*In the Nick of Time.*'

A poor woman, being in the greatest destitution—not having even the commonest necessities of life, nor so much as a little soup to place before her husband when he returned from his hard day's work, by which he earned but scanty wages—

turned in this her pitiable condition to the Fountain of Mercy. Full of confidence, she began a Novena to the Sacred Heart, begging to be delivered from this distress, which afflicted the whole family. That very forenoon a neighbour brought her some needlework, paying a sum of money for it which enabled the poor creature to procure a little nourishment, not only for that day, but the next as well. Was this not indeed an answer to prayer ?

But the most remarkable part of the story was that the neighbour had herself only this one piece of money from her housekeeping store, and, as if urged by an invisible power, she paid for the work in advance, lest she should use the money on the following day for something else.

V.

THE SACRED HEART THE RETREAT OF THE
FALLEN

1. ‘*Come to Me, all ye who labour, and are heavily burdened.*’

T was on the eve of Corpus Christi, in the year 1864, that a good and pious woman was exhorting an unfortunate man, whose sad state of soul she was fully aware of, to begin a Novena to the Sacred Heart. She told him to say nine times each day the *Gloria Patri*, with the aspiration, ‘Sweet Heart of Jesus, grant that I may love Thee more and more.’

He promised to follow her advice, and hardly had the unhappy man begun this prayer than a strange peace spread over his soul. On the third day he felt himself compelled to go to church, to beg help and pardon from Almighty God. He followed the inspiration, and at once our loving Lord filled him with as much remorse and sorrow

for his past as with confidence in the love of His Divine Heart. The young man went to confession quite overwhelmed with joy on account of the holy peace which he had found after so many years' misery, and he can scarcely refrain from repeating again and again, 'Oh how infinite are Thy mercies, my good Jesus, to us poor sinners!'

2. A Triumph of the Sacred Heart in Dalmatia.

It may not be generally known that, though the people of this country are full of faith and religious sentiments, they are easily moved to revenge; it may be on account of their intercourse with the schismatic Greeks, who are in their very midst, or because of their proximity to the Turks, who look on revenge as a duty. When an injury is done to anyone, it is looked upon as if done to the whole family, and the remembrance of it is handed down from generation to generation, until revenge is finally taken, or a fitting satisfaction has been made. During their missions the priests make it their aim to try and put an end to this sort of deadly enmity. It was in the year 1855 that Fathers Carrara and Basil began a mission at Zara, in Dalmatia. One day a man came to see Father Basil, and the following conversation took place:

'Will you help me, Father, for my life is in danger?'

'How so?' asked the missionary.

'In my youth,' answered he, 'I quarrelled with a gentleman of a neighbouring village; we came to blows, and in the end I killed him, for which crime I have had to undergo twenty years' penal servitude. My term expired two years ago, when I returned to my native country. The family, however, still pursue me with their hatred, and each day seek to take revenge on me, so I pass my life in continual fear and anxiety. Deliver me, I beg of you, from this pitiable state.'

'My son, may God protect you, for indeed I know not what I can do for you.'

The unhappy man begged and entreated so earnestly that the good Father promised to attempt a reconciliation. But when the priest with whom the missionary lodged learnt his intention, he assured him that many influential persons had already tried their utmost, and that to make peace between them was quite impossible.

'Impossible, indeed,' answered the missionary, 'if I rely on my own strength, but I place all my confidence in the Sacred Heart, and I doubt not that It will grant me this favour.'

The next morning the missionary started with the magistrate of the village, taking with him two

pictures of the Sacred Heart, which he had covered with a cloth, He reached the residence of the injured party, and asked to see the master of the house. He was shown into the room of the murdered man's two sons.

'I have come,' he said by way of introduction, 'to bless you, your family, and your possessions.' These words were received with much joy and gratitude. The missionary, making use of the favourable impression he had already made, added, 'You will not receive the blessing from me but from the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary;' and then he uncovered the pictures.

The two brothers, deeply moved, fell at the feet of the missionary.

'Stay; before the Sacred Hearts will bless you,' he further continued, 'you must fulfil one condition, which They require of you through me.'

'Father, it matters not what you ask,' said the elder brother, 'we are ready to do it—are we not?,' he said, turning to his brother.

'Yes,' answered the other, 'we are perfectly ready.'

'Very well; the Sacred Hearts command you to forgive the murderer of your father.'

Scarcely were these words spoken than the elder brother, who was the more obstinate of the two, stretching out his arms, cried out:

'Where is he, Father, that we may tell him we forgive him from our hearts ?'

All present were very much surprised at this unexpected change, and the missionary immediately sent for the poor culprit, who was anxiously awaiting the result of the interview. He came to the door of the room, and, falling on his knees, greeted the two brothers with the usual salutation, 'Praised be Jesus Christ!' and then asked if he might enter. On receiving an answer in the affirmative, he came a little nearer, and saying again while still on his knees the same salutation, he added :

'May I come still nearer ?'

Receiving the same answer, he went towards the elder brother. Then, greeting him a third time, he asked if the reconciliation might be completed. At these words, the injured man, extending his arms, came forward and embraced him as he would a friend. All present—for many had come to witness the scene—were moved to tears. But the missionary showed the pictures of the Sacred Heart, saying :

'You have mutually pardoned each other, but now both parties must ask forgiveness from the Sacred Heart, the one for the injustice and crime he has been guilty of, the other for this long-harboured hatred.'

They obeyed, after which there was a general clasping of hands, as is the custom in that part of the country, including men, women, and even the little children ; for the offence would not have been considered completely blotted out if even the smallest child had been forgotten at this reconciliation, because in later years that child would have had power to demand full satisfaction had he been omitted.

The missionary exhorted them to keep the newly-acquired peace, and to cultivate a true Devotion to the Sacred Heart. Then the pardoned murderer could no longer contain his happiness :

‘ During my long imprisonment,’ he said, ‘ I was fortunate enough to earn about £12. I now wish this money to be employed having Masses said for the soul of the deceased.’

‘ No,’ answered the elder brother, ‘ we will take care of that. This money must be given to the Sacred Heart, to Whom we owe this favour. With it we will buy a large frame for the two pictures, which must then be placed in the church as an everlasting memorial of our reconciliation, and for the veneration of the faithful.’

This plan met with universal approbation, and was soon put into execution.

Before the missionary left he had the happiness

of seeing these three friends kneeling side by side at the altar-rails to receive their Lord, Who had shown them how to forgive. And when the day came that terminated the mission they publicly renewed their promise henceforth to preserve peace, and to be on good terms with each other. It is superfluous to remark that this event made the deepest impression, and many inhabitants of the village were moved to tears. Moreover, a large number of them were also induced to put an end to their quarrels, and seek reconciliation.

Thus was made manifest and confirmed the truth of that promise made by our Lord to Blessed Margaret Mary, that the pictures of His Sacred Heart would bestow very rich graces on all those who should pay It honour.

3. *The Sacred Heart among the Soldiers (an Adventure of our own Day).*

In Italy one very cold winter's night a priest was returning home from a sick call, and was hurrying to reach his humble dwelling. His way led through a public avenue, and the leafless, ice-covered trees only a little obscured the pale rays of the moon. He was, he thought, alone in this walk, which a short time before had been crowded with people. Suddenly a human voice sounded

in his ear, and he thought he heard sighs. The good priest stopped, and he saw at a little distance a military uniform. He soon clearly distinguished a soldier leaning against a tree. At first the priest thought the man was intoxicated, and was going away with that impression. However, he approached nearer, to make certain that the man was not in danger of falling. It struck him at the same time that the soldier did not make a noise like a drunken man, for he was groaning and sobbing.

The priest came up to him, laid his hand gently on the man's shoulder, and said :

' What has happened to you, my friend ?'

The soldier turned round at such a question, though rather unwillingly, closely examined the speaker with an air of astonishment, but answered nothing.

The priest repeating his question, the soldier then stammered out :

' Perhaps you are the military chaplain ?'

' No, I am not the military chaplain,' rejoined the priest, ' but I am a priest, and have a lively interest in all who are unhappy. So tell me, my friend, what ails you.'

These words made an impression on the soldier quite contrary to that which the good priest had desired.

The man replied disdainfully :

' Nothing, nothing is the matter with me.'

And having said these words, he was preparing to go away.

' But, friend,' said the priest gently, ' a little while ago you were apparently oppressed with great sadness, for I heard you sighing and groaning, and this sorrow seems to weigh on you very heavily. Is this not the case ?'

' Quite so, reverend Father.'

' And you are still oppressed with it ? If I could do anything to relieve you, I would, with all my heart. Only tell me straight out if you still feel sad.'

' Oh yes, Father ; I suffer like a lost soul.'

' You see, then, my friend, it is very fortunate I came across you here ; perhaps you do not know that I am in an especial manner a friend of soldiers. But would it not be well for me to take you to a doctor ?'

' No, Father, I am not ill, but I have been tormented by anxiety for many days. I get no peace by day or night, and I have no one to whom I can tell my trouble ; but, on the other hand, I should not have courage to open my heart to anyone.'

Now the priest knew it was no bodily pain with which he had to deal. He urged he

soldier to open his heart to him, at the same time reassuring him that he was the soldier's friend.

'Well, then,' the man began somewhat crossly, 'where is your confessional ?'

'Do you wish to go to confession as well ?'

'Yes.'

'Very well, come to my house.'

The priest took the soldier kindly by the arm, and asked him if he would go with him. But he refused, saying that the signal had already been given for the soldiers to return, and that he scarcely had sufficient time to reach the barracks ; besides, he had not yet properly examined his conscience. The priest did not want the poor man to wait until morning, so he made a final effort.

'My friend,' he said, 'I should be very much afraid to let you go without the consolation of which you are in need. I know a way of removing this difficulty : you can make your confession here at once.'

The soldier looked at the priest astounded.

'Yes,' the latter continued, 'you will sleep more peacefully to-night, and to-morrow you can come to me again if you like. I can hear your confession now. I will sit over by that tree, and you can kneel by me, and I will help you in your

accusation. If we see anyone coming, we will stand up and appear to be in conversation. Is this not a good idea ?'

Our soldier accepted the offer of the resolute priest ; he knelt by the tree, the confessor sat down, and the confession began. Happily they were not disturbed, and it was over in a few minutes. When the good man rose again he was full of joy and delight.

'I did not know, Father,' he cried, 'that one could go to confession in this way, and I give you my most grateful thanks.'

'Rather thank our good God,' the priest rejoined, 'Who has with His grace helped you to make this confession.'

'Do you know, Father,' the soldier went on, 'that I believe my mother, who is a good pious woman, has obtained this grace for me. When I joined the regiment four years ago, she said to me : "George, I will say daily an 'Our Father' that you may always remain a good Christian ; but if you should go astray, may God give you no peace until you have been to your duties." The confession was a hard task for me, but now it is over, and I am once more happy.'

'You are right, my friend,' replied the priest, 'your good mother has prayed for you. But now will you promise me something ?'

'I will promise anything you wish, reverend Father.'

'Well, then, promise me to say every day one "Our Father" for those of your comrades who are unwilling to go to their religious duties.'

'Yes, I promise you,' said the soldier, giving his hand to the priest, 'and in a few days I hope to send some of my comrades to you.'

The priest received the promise with great joy, and it was fulfilled sooner than he expected.

Three or four days had scarcely elapsed when a soldier came to the priest's house, and with a threatening mien accosted him thus :

'Father, I would like to know why you did not salute me ?'

When the priest had recovered somewhat from his astonishment, he quietly answered :

'Listen, my brave soldier : I do not remember you at all. It seems to me that we are unknown to each other ; but possibly we have met somewhere.'

'Indeed we have seen each other,' rejoined the soldier in the same excited tone ; 'you passed quite close to the guard-house, you saluted my comrade, and you did not notice me—I was only a short distance off.'

'If you saluted me and I did not return the

greeting, I certainly did not notice you—of this you may be certain.'

'No, Father, I did not salute you; but nevertheless I want to know why you did not greet me?'

A doubt now arose in the priest's mind as to whether the man was right in his head; this idea disappeared after he had looked at the man more closely, but he could not account for such strange conduct. Meanwhile the priest explained in a friendly way, but at the same time firmly, that he only greeted those whom he knew and who did so first; he followed this principle with soldiers especially, but he would not expose them to ridicule. The priest further remarked that he knew the soldier whose greeting he had returned, and that he himself, moreover, was a friend of soldiers. Indeed, he did know some of those of the same regiment.

'Nevertheless, my friend,' continued the priest, 'your complaints do not displease me, and so long as you desire such a proof of affection and esteem from a priest, it shows that you love religion and priests.'

'You are mistaken, Father,' answered the soldier, 'I do not like priests at all. Until now I could not even see one without getting into a rage.'

'Good gracious! I should not have thought such a thing of you.'

'But it is true; when my comrades abuse the priests, then I also insult them more and more, until they—but enough of that. Now I am vexed that you passed me by without a greeting, so I resolved to come and ask you the reason of it.'

'Very well, my friend. as you speak so frankly, we may, I hope, come to a good understanding. I do not, indeed, know you very well, but I am perfectly convinced that you have not always hated priests, for it seems to me that you have a good heart.'

'Oh yes, you are quite right; for while I was still at home everyone used to say of me, "His head may be full of anger, but his heart is good."

'I venture also to say that you reverenced priests at the time of your First Communion.'

At the remembrance of his First Communion his better nature showed itself, and he answered by an affirmative nod of the head. The priest continued :

'If you like, I will tell you why you loved priests then, and why you are changed towards them now.'

'Father, can you really tell me?'

'It is very simple, my dear friend: you loved religion then and practised it, but now—'

'And now,' interrupted the soldier, deeply moved—'now, alas! say no more!'

'And now for a long time you have been reading bad books; now you have constant intercourse with evil companions, and when you see a priest your conscience reproaches you and your heart misgives you. Oh, then you were happy, were you not? But I fear you are no longer so.'

The soldier narrowly scanned the priest, and said :

'How do you know all that, Father?'

'I am certain you are unhappy.'

'I am indeed very, very unhappy,' continued the soldier; 'and, since you show such an interest in my welfare, I will be open with you. For many days I have resolved to put an end to my life. An interior voice pursues me and urges me to make away with myself, and whenever I endeavour to turn away this thought, remorse and sorrow allow me neither peace nor sleep. When you passed the guard-house just now I had planned a way of ending my misery.' With these words, he drew a cord from his pocket. 'This morning,' he continued, 'I was going to hang a stone round my neck and throw myself into the water.'

The good priest trembled at this declaration, but did not let his emotion show itself. He took the soldier gently by the hand, and said :

'Yes, my friend, your unhappy state must come to an end, but not in the way you mention. Another way is given you, and this infallible means you know. You are living at enmity with God, and you must make your peace with Him.'

'And how is this to be done?'

'You must return to the practice of your religion, which formerly made you so happy; you must go to confession.'

'Yes, I know that is the only thing to be done; but it is impossible!'

'How so? Why should it be so impossible?'

'I will explain to you, Father. I shall never find anyone who would hear my confession. Then it would cost me too much to be seen in church by everyone, and have to wait my turn.'

'But who asks you to do this? You are not yet able for it; you can make your confession to me now, before you go away, if you like. It will be over sooner than you think, and you will be troubled no longer with the thought of taking away your life.'

The soldier hesitated for a moment, then threw himself on his knees and began his confession. When he rose up he shook the priest warmly by the hand, and said:

'I have done my duty, and I am now quite happy.'

‘Yes, my friend, your trouble is over, thank Divine Providence which has watched over you, and the ever blessed Virgin who has preserved you from greater misfortune. Now you are at peace again with God and yourself. This great grace is not owing to any merit of yours now, is it?’

‘Oh no, Father; I own I was in a very bad way; but perhaps some kind comrade has been praying for me.’

‘You are right: someone has prayed that you might be converted, and now that you are again in a state of grace you must promise me to say every day one “Our Father” and “Hail Mary” for those who are still deprived of sanctifying grace.’

‘Not only one,’ he readily replied, ‘but as many as I can. Oh, how happy is the man who lives at peace with God! If I am able to persuade some of my comrades to see you, I will bring them to you, if you will allow me.’

‘And come with them yourself as often as you like—the oftener the better. I have already told you that I am a friend to soldiers. So good-bye for the present, my brave warrior, good-bye.’ And with these words they parted.

In this way the good priest became known to several soldiers of the garrison, and it was not

long before these brought others to him. On a certain feast he had assembled them all around him in the chapel where he said Mass for them, and he then explained in what Devotion to the Sacred Heart consisted, and enrolled them in the Apostleship of Prayer, in which he gave the name of Apostles to his own particular soldiers. He did this that they might continue to frequent the Sacraments, and say daily one 'Our Father' and 'Hail Mary' for their comrades. From that time all the enrolled soldiers redoubled their zeal ; to an old corporal the priest gave the title of Zelator, and he became one in every sense of the word.

Meanwhile the war of 1866 broke out. The sight of the approaching danger re-enkindled the faith in the hearts of several young soldiers, who had either gone astray or become indifferent to their religion, and numbers of them went to confession before going to the war. Many a tear fell from the eyes of those brave men when they had to say farewell to their good pastor. They promised him that before all things they would never neglect their religious duties, and also that they would continue the work of the Apostleship, and let him know how they fared.

Some months later the priest received a letter from the old corporal, which had been written on

the battle-field of Custoza. He himself as well as his comrades had fought in the battle. By a special protection of Heaven, they were all not only alive but safe and sound, without the slightest wound. On receiving this news, the good priest said a Mass of thanksgiving in honour of the Sacred Heart.

4. A Quarrel terminated through the Sacred Heart.

In a Brazilian 'picade,' where the Feast of the Sacred Heart was always solemnized with most praiseworthy fervour, there had existed for many years a deeply-rooted enmity between two wealthy families. One family inhabited a house at the foot of the mountain, the other had its property on the summit, the former being under the belief that their cattle had been killed by their neighbours, who resided above them. The charge soon went from mouth to mouth, and reached even to the height of the hill, for where will not evil report spread to? This family, resenting the accusation felt itself robbed in a twofold manner of its honour and good name.

A reconciliation had often been attempted, but always in vain; but God's time was at hand. A missionary, who came for a short visit to this 'picade,' preached in their church one Sunday,

taking for his sermon the Gospel of the day, which treats of the two debtors, and seized the opportunity of impressing on his hearers the duty of love for our enemies. The children had been told beforehand to pray for a favourable issue, and on that Sunday afternoon Devotions to the Sacred Heart for the same intention were begun. We will let the missionary tell the rest of the story himself:

'After these Devotions and Benediction, I had been unable to tell anyone of my plan for a reconciliation, as I had to leave for a distant "picade." On Monday afternoon I returned, and towards evening I began the attempt with a beating heart. In order to bring the heads of the two families together, I begged the one who lived at the foot of the mountain to accompany me to the other, as I wanted to visit that house once more. All my entreaties and persuasions, and even the remembrance of my sermon, seemed of no avail. I began to feel disheartened, and whispered to myself, "Oh Divine Heart, I never shall succeed unless Thou help me." However, I asked him again, with many remonstrances, to come with me, and at length received this answer:

'"Father, I have never refused a priest anything, so I will not refuse you this favour."

'But there was still a hard struggle to go through from the other party. Finally, the love of the Sacred Heart conquered the old hatred, though night had already set in before they had given each other the kiss of peace. Both lived happier and holier lives after this reconciliation, for the heart of man is not created to hate, but to love, and can only find true happiness in the love of God and its neighbour. May the infinite loving Heart of Jesus become more known and loved in the forests of Brazil.'

5. *The Ruler of Hearts.*

An unfortunate young girl had been about a year in our Reformatory; we had taken her in at the earnest wish of her family, who were respectable people, for the express purpose of trying, with God's grace, to make an impression on a heart so hardened and steeped in sin. But on her part a good will was wanting, and she constantly strived to escape from our supervision. After nearly a year's hard work and trouble, we acceded to her request. This was a hard blow for the poor family, but the scandal to the other children was so great that she was obliged to leave, for she scoffed at the holiest things.

On the day fixed for her departure we thought

we would take this unhappy creature with us once more before the Blessed Sacrament before she left us, and she willingly agreed to our proposal. We let her kneel quietly for a little time, then, as it seemed to be too long for her, we said aloud one 'Our Father' in honour of the Sacred Heart, with the aspiration, 'Sacred Heart of Jesus,' but we could say no more, for in a heartrending voice the poor child cried aloud, 'Have mercy on me!' This was the first ray of grace that had entered her soul, and who can say how it came? How great, infinitely great, are the mercies of the Sacred Heart of Jesus! We left her a little longer with that Divine Heart that It might bestow another look of pity on this poor soul. At the door of the chapel she earnestly begged that she might be allowed to remain, for it was her firm resolution to begin, with the grace of God, a new life. We had joyfully waited for this; she came to the class, and, to the astonishment of the other children, took her work, which she had never touched for a week. She remained industrious and quiet, and now only desired to be able to make a good confession. She prepared herself for this many weeks beforehand. On June 10 she was permitted to receive Holy Communion, the first time for many, many weeks. This was a day of joy both for the Sisters and the children,

she herself declaring that the day of her First Communion itself had not been nearly such a happy one. Oh, may the loving Heart of Jesus give her the grace of perseverance, which we have every reason to hope for! Since then she has become pious and earnest, industrious at her work, and full of gratitude towards her loving God, and she is now a consolation instead of a burden to us.

6. *A Mother's Trouble.*

As is, alas! too often the case, abroad as well as in England, a poor family numbered amongst its members a good-for-nothing youth. In order to lead a disorderly life in a large town, he had run away from his home, though he would at short intervals return; but, never finding things according to his will and desire, he could not remain long at home, much to the grief of his poor mother, who shed many bitter tears over him; and many were the sighs and fervent prayers that ascended to heaven from her heart, now so cast down and consumed with anguish. She had often been on the point of losing courage, but her confessor constantly reminded her of the help she might obtain from the Sacred Heart, and this he did to enliven and strengthen her confidence in Divine grace. She would then rise again with

renewed courage, and, hoping against hope, she never ceased from praying to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to St. Joseph to come to her aid.

One Lent the young man came home, but, contrary to all expectation, remained longer than was his wont. His poor mother was overjoyed that our Lord had already done so much, but there was one thing grieved her especially: it was Easter-time, and her son refused to approach the Sacraments, although he was in such a state of sin. Full of anxiety, but also full of confidence, his mother went with her daughter to confession on Easter Saturday. She had scarcely returned home when she found her son in a perfect fury, screaming so much that she did not know what had happened. ‘If you will always be worrying me to go to confession and getting it talked about, I will never, never go near the confessional,’ he was saying, and went on in this manner for some time, his mother not daring to answer him. Next morning she went to church to receive Holy Communion. When she got to the church she could scarcely believe her eyes—her son was kneeling near the confessional! The grace of the Sacred Heart had conquered the evil will of man, and from this time the young man was completely changed in many ways, a proof that he received the Blessed Sacrament in good dispositions.

7. The Burden of Sin

Another wonderful example of the softening influence of the Sacred Heart on the most obdurate sinner comes to us from Frankfort. It is a case of a poor youth who had grievously fallen into sin, and there appeared to be every likelihood of his passions finally plunging the unfortunate boy into the deep abyss of hell.

His family were in great distress on his account, when someone advised his sorrowing relations to dedicate him to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and quietly to await with confidence the help that was sure to follow; and they were not disappointed, for after one or two periods of repentance and relapses into his former faults, the great Physician of souls sent him a long and serious illness, during which time the strict judgments of God were vividly placed before the sinner's mind, and thus what sickness had begun was completed by sanctifying grace, and from that time he who could not be brought to approach the Sacraments begged in his earnest repentance to be allowed to receive his Lord each week, giving a certain proof of his true conversion and childlike confidence.

May this true and touching story encourage all who are suffering on account of some erring relation to seek help from the Sacred Heart through

the intercession of the immaculate heart of Mary !

8. *Converted at the Gate of a Monastery.*

It is an ancient custom in monasteries for monks to give to the poor of the neighbourhood a portion of that which God provides for their own dinner. Two novices or a lay-brother turn up their habits after the mid-day meal, and, taking a big heavy kettle, go to the porch, where many poor people are awaiting some warm soup. After a short prayer the distribution begins ; whilst one of the novices gives the food, the other distributes the bowls and spoons to the insatiable guests, and then instructs the audience in Christian morals and doctrine.

Many novices made their narration and explanation so attractive, that the spoon at times would involuntarily drop into the bowl, and the poor people would listen with bated breath and eyes wide open, so as not to miss a single word of that which the 'young priest,' as they called him, was saying.

In the monastery about which we are writing this beautiful custom is still carried out to the fullest extent, and I myself have often been either the distributor or catechist. We inherit this from our beloved forefathers, together with the saying,

'He who feeds the poor receives his reward from God.' And the truth of this has been experienced in a twofold manner, for the monastery has never wanted for necessaries. The supply has indeed sometimes been scarce, but we have never suffered real want. This is God's reward in a temporal way. Then we have often been able to do good to the souls of many of these poor, and this is the reward in a spiritual way.

Our novices' labour has hardly ever been so blessed as during the December of the year 1865. It was the time when a jubilee was granted to our diocese. At these 'poor meals' (as we called them) travelling journeymen would often be hospitably entertained, or perhaps some poor man on his way to a distant country, although I do not know what attraction our little town could possibly have had for them. Altogether our novices have induced about twenty-nine of these sort of folk to put their consciences in order. For many this was very necessary, as some had not been to confession for two or three years, and others for seven, nine, and even fifteen years. But a special good work was done with regard to one old man, who was seventy years of age; he had already shirked his religious duties for twenty-two years. The way in which it all came about was so wonderful, through the active influence of

the sweetest Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and the operation of grace so striking, that we cannot let its history fall into oblivion, or be confined to our monastery alone. I will therefore relate the incident simply as it happened.

It was on Saturday, December 9, during the Octave of the Immaculate Conception, that two novices as usual took their soup-kettle to the poor, and fulfilled their pious duty. The desire of bringing new penitents to the confessional, and the happy result of their former endeavours, animated them with a special confidence in the Queen of Heaven, to whom they rightly attributed their former success. But the number of guests this day was particularly great, for many foreigners had arrived. The novices immediately began their labours. The one whose turn it was to instruct came upon two Tyrolese, who were thoroughly enjoying their soup.

‘How do you do?’ the novice said.

Both smiled and answered cheerfully:

‘Oh very well—very well indeed.’

An old man who was sitting near became angry at such a friendly demonstration, and glancing sideways at the Tyrolese muttered to himself:

‘Why ever couldn’t you remain in your Tyrol, if it agrees so well with you? There are beggars

enough in our country, without needing to feed strangers.'

He continued grumbling in this strain until the novice directed his attention towards him. Thinking something was the matter, he spoke to him kindly and said:

'Well, my good old fellow, what is amiss, and how do you do?'

'Good heavens!' he answered, 'very bad—very bad indeed. And what ails me? Why, everything.'

Then the following dialogue took place:

Novice. But what is your occupation?

Old Man. I have none; I am a beggar, like many others. The best part of my life I fought for the Emperor and my fatherland in battle. But now that I am old, nothing remains for me but to beg.

Novice. Must you really beg? Is there nothing you can do to earn your living?

Old Man. Look at me, dear reverend Father. I carry the weight of seventy years on my shoulders, and my hands begin to tremble. My eyes have become dim, and my memory fails me. Who would take me—who would give me work? Nowadays they want strong young men. Old people cannot earn anything, so they are sent away.

Novice. But have you really no other occupation but begging ?

Old Man. No, I have not, and beggar's bread is indeed a hard piece of bread.

Novice. Have you no one to help or support you ?

Old Man. Whom could I have ? My beggar's staff is my support, and the brandy-bottle my help, with which I drive away all care, and dispel all sorrow.

Novice. That is not, indeed, the right way to relieve the heart. Are you not a Christian ? Do you not know what our Lord says ?—‘ Come to Me, all ye who labour and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you.’ Do you not know this exhortation ? And if you do, then why do you not follow it ? Nevertheless, I myself see no reason why you need beg, or drink brandy, for if you believed in these words, you would find that the good God never abandons anyone who does his part and hopes in Him. Is it not so ?

Old Man. Yes, with regard to hope ; but what you say about work does not agree with me. I am already too old.

Novice. Then I must be content with enjoining confidence in God. But tell me truly ; Do you ever think, during the day, of God ? For you must know that, if things do not always go right

with us, it is our own fault. God then withdraws His graces if we refuse to pay him homage. Do you really ever think of God ?

Old Man. Well, well, reverend Father ! Think of God ? I should think I do, indeed ? After I have been wandering about for hours together, and when I stop finally in one place, then at once the thought of God comes to me. There are so many things to speak about and to treat of. You see, I place before Him the exact state of my affairs, and complain of my bitter distress, and how my sorrow often rends my heart. So in the morning when I rise, and in the evening when I lie down on my straw, I always think of God, and pray to Him. A man is not a heathen because he drinks brandy.

Novice. That's right, my good old fellow ! I am greatly rejoiced. If you only *think* of God, I am more satisfied. But that does not comprise everything. You know, we have still other duties and precepts to fulfil. After all, prayer is easy ; but how do you know that God receives your prayer, if you neglect His other commands, if your soul perhaps is burdened with sin ? And what about your yearly confession ?

Here the old man interrupted his meal for a while, straightened himself, and looked at his questioner in a strange sort of way. Displeasure

and surprise were written on his countenance. Then he answered in an almost injured tone :

‘Confession ! Confession, young sir ?—that is the occupation of ignorant people. It may be of some value to those who never come in contact with the world; but men who have learnt to know the world, who live out of doors by their wits and experience, who, by the way, have also a little intellect—these have no need of confession. Therefore, I know nothing about it.’

Novice. And are you still a Christian and a Catholic ?

Old Man. I am both, but I am also a man of experience and understanding, and as such I do not go to confession.

Novice. You have never, then, entered a confessional ?

Old Man. Oh yes, sometimes, when I was young and inexperienced ; but those years, fortunately, have passed away.

Novice. And how long is it since you went to confession ?

Old Man. Good gracious, what a question ! It is twenty-two years since I bothered a priest, and from that time a new light came to me. I have seen confession do so little good that I have not made the slightest exertion since to open my heart to a priest.

Novice. Now I see it all. Twenty-two years without confession. Do you know, my dear old man, the cause of your beggar's staff, of your poverty and distress? You have forsaken God, therefore He has forsaken you. Return again to our Lord, and He will return to you. How could Almighty God help you if you have bound His Hands, so that He cannot bestow His graces? If you do not go to confession, it will go evil with you during life, still worse at death, and unspeakably terrible hereafter. God has given us this one means of having our sins forgiven after Baptism, and if we do not make use of it, there is only one alternative left—hell. For St. Augustine says, 'Either confess or burn.'

Old Man. My dear young sir, do not trouble about me. Once for all, do not try and induce me to go to confession. God sees my interior, He knows the state of my mind; and if I lay my sins open before Him in my heart, and I repent of them with my whole soul, He must, on account of His infinite mercy, pardon me.

Novice. He will not pardon them as long as it is in your power to get a priest. God wishes us to show our spiritual leprosy to a priest. He does nothing without a purpose; and if He has given to priests the power of binding and loosing, He also obliges the faithful to submit their sins to

the judgment of a priest, and no one can possibly be a judge who does not know the state of the penitent. Therefore disclosure or confession is absolutely necessary, and not an invention of priests.

Old Man. What an idea! Now just listen to me. It is such a startling theory that confession is *not* an invention, for where and when could the old hermits confess their sins? They never came out of their caves and ravines. One does not even read or hear of a hermit's confession. If they did not want it, no more do we, and still less myself.

Novice. Look, my good old fellow, you affirm more than you can prove. According to your reasoning, I can argue still further. The hermits were not even baptized.

Old Man. Oh, come! they were baptized. How could they have been Christians otherwise? Why should they have been deprived of baptism?

Novice. I prove it by your own words. We never read of the hermits being baptized; therefore they did not receive baptism.

Old Man. But that proves nothing, reverend Father. How could they be Christians and even, in the end, saints? One does not read these things in books, because it goes without saying.

Novice (smiling). I just wanted to hear you say

that. Do you think they would have remained Christians and have become saints if they never went to confession? It is such a natural thing for a good Christian to confess his sins that the old hermits did not think it worth while to write about it.

Old Man. But I will not go to confession—I won't! No, no, no!

Novice. Then you will not obtain pardon of your sins.

Old Man. That is not true. God certainly forgives me my sins when I repent of them with my whole heart, and that I do every day. When I throw myself down quite alone under a tree in the forest, I begin to pray to my Lord and Saviour. I often think of the bitter sufferings of Christ or call on Mary our Beloved Lady, and thereupon I repent of my sins, so that I am certain they are forgiven.

Novice. You are much mistaken here, for if we do not fulfil the condition by which we obtain pardon, everything else is of no avail.

Here the old man lost patience, and began to show uneasiness. Putting his spoon down and taking his staff, he rose, and cried out quite angrily:

'I am not a sinner; I have no need of confession, for I set no value on it. I will not go to

confession, and you are the last one to persuade me.'

With these words he prepared to leave. The Novice put himself in his way, took hold of his arm, and gently drew him back to his seat, saying :

' My good man, your soup is still there ; will you not finish your meal ?'

The enraged old fellow, after a little persuasion, took his place again, and said :

' I will eat my soup, but I won't go to confession.'

Meanwhile, one of the Superiors had approached, and had viewed the whole scene. The obstinacy of the old man, his resolute refusal, his attempt to go away, had elicited this expression from him :

' My beloved son, you will scarcely be able to move this man, but have another try.'

And the conversation began again.

Novice. My good friend, perhaps after all you will not go to hell.

Old Man. Oh no, indeed ! I am not a bit afraid, for I am no sinner.

Novice. But you can at least fear that he who does not confess his sins cannot go to heaven. But just tell me, if you were to die now, do you really think you would go to heaven ? Do you wish to die in this state ?

Old Man (cheerfully). Oh, I am longing to die, for when our eyes close in death all distress is at an end. Do I think I shall go to heaven? No, I am too bad, too poor, too unworthy; but I can very well hope for paradise. I give up all thought of heaven; I shall go to paradise, so why should I not wish to die?

Novice. What do you say about paradise? Whatever do you mean?

Old Man. You do not know? But surely you have heard of the vision which St. Gregory the Great had? An angel of God once led him to a palace full of wonderful delights, and there showed him the splendour of God's glory. When they were returning, the angel asked:

'Gregory, where do you think we were just now?'

And the Saint replied:

'Surely in heaven.'

'No,' answered the angel, 'we were in paradise.'

It is of this paradise I speak; it is a place where he goes who has renounced his right to heaven, but who cannot be sent to hell, and I shall go there.

The Novice, unprepared for this answer, began at first a little timidly and then more courageously, to try and root out this error, but in vain. When

he returned to the old *thema*, and pressed him more and more to go to confession, the old man could no longer contain his anger and indignation. With suppressed rage he looked at the novice, and finally broke out in loud protestations, almost swearing he would never go to confession. The young religious did not lose his equanimity, but after this outburst he answered earnestly :

‘Have you ever considered how much the Sacred Heart of our Lord suffers on account of your obstinacy, resistance, and lukewarmness?’

These words, as if the novice had been inspired, struck home. The mere words, ‘Heart of our Lord,’ had visibly touched and moved the old man. For some time he resisted, but his anger disappeared, and his answers were less perverse. This change did not escape the novice, and the other poor people noticed it so much that they began to speak encouragingly to the obstinate man. One especially whom the novice had persuaded to go to his religious duties became interested. Striking his breast, he said :

‘Aha, old man, see here, all is now at peace and quiet. Yesterday it was not so ; but I went to confession, and to-day to Holy Communion, and now I could almost jump for joy. So don’t be a fool ; your sins are not so rare and precious that they need be put under lock and key.’

'Silence, simpleton!' cried the angered man; 'What experience have you had? Have you wandered over the world like I have? Have you obtained as much knowledge and insight as I have?'

In the meantime things took a new turn. A thought suddenly arose in the mind of the other novice which inspired him with much confidence.

'You said just now,' he ventured to the still grumbling old man, 'that you frequently called on and revered the most pure Virgin Mary.'

The old man, who was on the point of going, and had already made a few attempts to get free, was a little startled, and then said:

'Well, what do you want with me now? Nothing about confession, I hope.'

'I already see,' rejoined the novice, 'that you cannot be persuaded, so I will not bother you any more. But will you not do me the pleasure to accompany me to our church, and there we will pray together? Whatever our Lord and our Blessed Lady inspire, that we will do.'

This proposal having been accepted, the novice, in order to avoid the danger of its being retracted, familiarly took the old man by the arm, pushed him gently into the monastery, and shut the door. Then he withdrew, in order to get the necessary

permission to go to the church, which lay in another part of the town. It was about time he came back again, for the old man was beginning to get impatient, and said :

‘ Let me out, for I must take a little brandy.’

He allowed himself to be pacified, and then both went to our Blessed Lady. The way led through our garden, where the other novices happened to be taking the usual mid-day recreation. They greeted their brother and the stranger with the beautiful salutation, ‘ Praised be Jesus Christ !’ Instead of returning it, the old man said :

‘ Reverend Fathers, they say I am a great sinner, but it is quite unintelligible to me.’

Then his companion took him by the hand, and led him to the place where the novices usually sat in summer, in order to spend a little time in pious conversation. There, where a house throws its shadow on the garden, stands an altar, constructed in the Gothic form, and artistically covered with the bark of trees ; it encloses the well-known picture of the miraculous Mater Admirabilis in Rome. Before it hangs a little basket also covered with bark, which contains a saucer for flowers. Before this picture the novice knelt, together with his companion ; he asked him to say some aspirations after him. The old

man obeyed willingly, only he could not be persuaded to repeat, 'Sweet Heart of Mary, be my Salvation.'

At length they returned to the church, and there they both knelt down in order to pay homage to the Blessed Sacrament. In the intensity of his fervour the novice promised the most Sacred Heart of Jesus and the sweet Heart of Mary two hundred acts of penance, thirty rosaries and ten Holy Communions if, through the intercession of the Saints of the Order, they would take pity on this poor sinner. After rather a long and fervent prayer they prostrated themselves before the picture of that Virgin whose joy and delight it is to assist us in our sorrows and troubles, and to hear our prayers. What prayer the old man said we do not know; suffice it to say that he was on his knees whilst the novice, full of confidence, laid his intention in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and poured out his heart in prayer and supplication. But it was at length time to leave the church; the novice sprinkled his companion with holy water, and then both left the House of God.

Now the novice's heart was beating fast; half full of fear, but half of confidence and hope, he addressed the obstinate man:

'How are you now, my good fellow?'

The man stood still, looked at the speaker and said :

‘Listen, Father, I will go to confession, for —for,’ he continued, thoughtfully shaking his head, ‘I am old, and who knows when the Lord will call me? My end may come very soon.’

The novice was so overwhelmed with joy that he would have liked to embrace the old man. Some hours later this poor soul was relieved of the burden of its sins.

Quiet and at peace with himself, quite changed from the previous day, the old man came again on the following day for his soup.

‘I was very unreasonable,’ he said, ‘but now I am undeceived; for confession is quite different from what I thought.’

He became enrolled in the Confraternity of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, received a medal of the Immaculate Conception, and as he was leaving he said to the novice :

‘I am a poor old man, reverend Father; I can do nothing but thank and pray for you. Praised be Jesus Christ!’

9. Happy under the Yoke of the Sacred Heart.

A young man of noble family, who had been brought up very luxuriously, was called by God to

a very strict Order. When his first fervour in the monastery had passed away, it seemed to the young man that the bread was too hard, the wine too sour, his habit too coarse, the cell too narrow, obedience unbearable, his brethren disagreeable, and the rule too severe. The temptation was so great that he finally gave way to it and secretly left the monastery, going towards his old home. On his way a beautiful youth suddenly followed him, and called to him to wait, as he would go with him. The religious, afraid of being betrayed, went still more quickly, but in the end, at the repeated calls of the stranger, he stopped. On hearing his gentle and friendly questions as to where he was hastening, the religious told him of his flight and the reasons of his desertion. Then the beautiful youth laid open his breast, a ray of light as if from the sun issued from it, and the religious saw by this gleam a wide and deep wound in the heart, from which blood was flowing. And then our loving Lord—for it was indeed himself—said in a gentle voice to the runaway :

‘ My son, return again to your monastery, and in future, if the bread seems hard to you, dip it in this Heart, which was opened for love of you, and it will become purified. If the wine is sour, mingle it with this Blood, and thus you will make

it sweet. If the habit is rough, lay it in this Wound, and it will become soft. In this loving Heart you will find obedience, solitude, religious observance, and the hard life smooth and easy.'

At this sight, and at these words, the young man felt great remorse. He returned to his brethren, followed our Lord's counsel, bore the many hardships with much patience, and spent the remainder of his life in great sanctity. This advice is not too difficult for others to follow.

VI

THE SPIRIT OF THE SACRED HEART BREATHES WHERE IT WILLETH.

1. *Through the Heart of the Mother to that of the Son.*

LTHOUGH the following incident is not of a miraculous nature, we cannot refrain from making it known, for the sake of its touching simplicity; and we know that nothing is more pleasing to the Heart of our Lord than childlike confidence in the heart of His Mother.

‘For how can we truly love thy Son,
Sweet Mother, if we love not thee?’

A few years ago, in a small town in Austria, a priest was preaching for the first time about the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the motives which ought to animate us to worship It with great ardour. As he left the pulpit and entered the sacristy he found a pious woman there awaiting him. Kissing his hand eagerly, she said, evidently with great interest:

'Yes Father, if such is the case with regard to the Heart of Jesus, how, then, is it with the heart of Mary?'

For a moment the priest was at a loss for the best answer to make, then he said:

'Madam, the heart of Mary is the gate to the Heart of Jesus; go, therefore, to the dear Mother of God, and she will open the Heart of her Son for you.'

2. Three Fruits of the Apostleship of Prayer.

Not very far from my home, writes a native of Austria, there lived a relation of mine, who, twenty-two years ago, married a Protestant, with the understanding that the children should be brought up in the Catholic faith. After a few years she began to perceive how great a mistake she had made, and all her thoughts and endeavours were directed to the conversion of her husband, but all in vain. Of their several sons, all died in childhood. This greatly grieved her husband, and it caused him to reflect more seriously.

After seventeen years of unceasing prayer on the part of his wife, at last the eyes of his soul were opened, and he was converted. But my cousin was not yet satisfied, and she now longed to see her father-in-law and brother-in-law in the

true fold. The Sacred Heart showed once more its great power. Illness, troubles and poverty fell on the house of the brother, who had become a Catholic, and he was very soon forsaken by all his Protestant friends and relations. This so impressed his father and brother, that they, too, made their Profession of Faith, with many tears, and to the great edification of all present.

The father was at this time over eighty years of age, and had been a bigoted Protestant.

3. The Sacred Heart and an Unhappy Mother.

A lady writes as follows in the *Messenger*: 'I had a relation who was foolish enough to marry a Protestant, in spite of having been educated in a convent school; moreover, she was willing to sign a contract that her children should be brought up as Protestants. The unhappy woman, however, persuaded her husband to allow the eldest girl to have a Catholic education if a vacancy could be obtained without expense in a convent school. The mother's endeavours to obtain a free education for her child were unsuccessful, but her relations and friends did not give up hope of its being eventually obtained. They had recourse to the Sacred Heart; and after many inquiries and much trouble, the long-desired favour was

granted. The little girl, who had been already secretly instructed in the Catholic faith by her mother, was taken by her father to the convent, and he even consented to allow her two younger sisters to attend the Catechism classes ; and thus was sown the first seeds which, we trust, was the beginning of a fruitful harvest.'

4. A Diseased Foot cured by the Sacred Heart.

Last year, in the month of June, I was suffering from so severe a pain in my right knee as to be quite unable to put even my foot to the ground. I asked the doctor's advice, and tried several remedies, but without any result. The slightest effort caused me pain, my knee turned blue, and was very troublesome.

Despairing of earthly help, I had recourse to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I made several Novenas, but even then my confidence was severely tested, and I was almost giving up hope when I resolved to make another Novena, and promised to publish my cure if it were granted. From that time my foot daily improved, I was able to stand again, and before long resumed my duties without experiencing the least inconvenience. But, alas ! I must confess my fault—I omitted to make the promised publication in the *Messenger*.

On October 14 the malady returned; all remedies were again useless. The physicians held a consultation, fomentations were ordered, but all to no purpose. Then came the tormenting thought that I should become lame, and, although still young, I should in all probability become a burden to the community.

After two months of bodily and mental suffering, I made another Novena to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and to St. Joseph, with a promise to publish it in the *Messenger* if I were cured again; I also took some Lourdes water. Thanks to these sacred and all-merciful Hearts, I already experienced great relief on the second day of the Novena. I am now once more in the school among my dear pupils, who had prayed so earnestly for my recovery.

5. *A Bad Disposition cured.*

From his childhood my younger brother showed signs of a very bad disposition, and, in fact, it had not improved even when he had left college. As often as I went home I heard the worst accounts of him. His tricks were of such a nature that I feared his having to be sent to a reformatory. All threats, admonitions, requests, and punishments were of no avail; indeed, they

produced just the contrary effect to the one we desired.

I loved my brother dearly, and was greatly distressed to think that perhaps he might disgrace our family ; this thought was the more painful as our deceased parents had led good Christian lives, and had been greatly respected by everyone. Knowing the number of favours obtained through prayers to the Sacred Heart, I sent the *Messenger* to several neighbours to read, and the hope arose in my breast that perhaps, as that Almighty Heart had granted so many graces to those who besought Its mercy, It would also hear my unworthy prayer. In the month of May, therefore, I made a Novena, and promised to have a Mass said in thanksgiving, and to publish it in the *Messenger* if my petition were granted.

How great was my joy upon hearing very shortly after this that my brother was improving, and after some months was so much changed as not to be recognised as the same man. Doubtless I owe these graces to the Divine Heart of Jesus.

6. *The All-powerful Physician.*

Two years ago it was my most earnest desire to dedicate myself to God in the religious state. But our dear Lord allowed my foot to become

diseased, which, according to the physician's opinion, would lead to the decay of the bone. The disease proved to be of a malignant character, and undermined my whole constitution. All the science of the physicians was of no avail : here was needed the skill of another Physician—of a Physician whose skill is Almighty, whose kindness is without limit.

Full, therefore, of an unshaken faith in Him Who once trod the land of Palestine, everywhere bestowing benefits, I placed all my trust in the goodness of His Sacred Heart. I had recourse to the Immaculate Conception, and made a Novena to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, promising to publish it in the *Messenger* if I were cured.

It seemed as though our Lord would not hear my prayer, perhaps in order to withdraw my heart more and more from the world to Himself. On the other hand, the desire to consecrate myself to the service of the Divine Majesty increased day by day.

I continued praying, and recommended my intention to a devout client of the Sacred Heart. In a few weeks there was a visible improvement ; the disease diminished, and already the hope arose in my breast that through the mighty help of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary I should

now soon recover my health, and be able to offer my life as a holocaust to my Saviour.

7. Saved from a Flood.

In the last terrible flood in the Rhine district the water rose higher than it had ever been known to do before. Our correspondent was in great distress on account of her lodgers and a small shop belonging to her. Knowing the power of the Sacred Heart, she promised a Novena in Its honour, and one to the Sacred Heart of Mary and to St. Joseph, promising to have a Mass said in thanksgiving, and to publish the favour in the *Messenger* if the shop was spared.

In the greatest anxiety, but still with much confidence, she besought the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary to keep watch at her door to prevent the water from entering in.

The flood rose higher and higher, so that they were at last obliged to remove the furniture and wares to the highest story of the house, and to take all possible precautions. The water continued to rise, and had now reached the threshold of the door, when suddenly it sank—so suddenly it was scarcely credible, but blessed be God for His goodness and mercy throughout eternity !

Words fail to express the gratitude that was

undoubtedly due to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

8. *Rescued from a Well by the Sacred Heart.*

A poor woman had been suffering for nine months from cramp, besides which she had endured great mental suffering. She had consulted many doctors, and at first they recommended her the 'Water Cure'; but this having proved ineffectual to relieve her, she at last consulted a specialist; but all he could say was;

'If I were to give you all the drugs I possess, I could not relieve you.'

Her mental anguish began to affect her mind, and she was on the brink of despair. Incessantly she begged her husband to kill her with an axe, and upon his refusal, she one day sprang into a well thirty feet deep. Her little son was standing close by at the time. Seeing what had happened, he called to his elder sister, and told her the terrible truth. She ran home at once, and begged the landlord to save their poor mother. Hastening to the spot, he rescued the unhappy woman by means of a bucket.

Marvellous to relate, she was unhurt; but her anguish of soul had not diminished.

At length, turning to her daughter, she said:

'Go to a priest and ask him to come to me. The Sacred Heart of Jesus has already helped me once before, and I trust will do so again.'

Hastening to the poor woman, the priest found her in a miserable state, and quite inconsolable. He did his best to quiet her, but her despondent state of mind had brought her to the verge of despair, and made her utter many words, and use arguments for which she was hardly responsible.

After a long conversation, which produced very little effect, he left her, and enrolling her and her family in the Apostleship of Prayer, and recommending them all to make a Novena to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and to St. Joseph, he awaited patiently for their prayers to achieve what his words had failed to do. All were astonished at the wonderful help the poor woman received. In a short time she had sufficiently recovered her health of mind and body to be able and willing to come to church; moreover, she received Holy Communion in thanksgiving for the grace of her conversion.

Full of joy and gratitude, she came to me soon afterwards, asking me to say a Mass in thanksgiving, and to publish the favour she had received in the *Messenger*. She moreover promised that every year, on the anniversary of the day on

which she had been rescued from an untimely death, she would receive Holy Communion in thanksgiving.

9. '*Nil Desperandum.*'

In the village of W——, about an hour's journey from the parish of G——, a girl of fifteen lay so ill that no hope was entertained of her recovery. She had received the Last Sacraments. Contrary to all expectations, she so far recovered as to be able to resume her household duties. Therefore my accustomed visits to the house had been discontinued during the last fortnight. On the Feast of St. Teresa I had intended taking her Holy Communion, as it was the feast of her patron saint; but this happily proved to be unnecessary, as the girl was now able to come to church.

One day, when doing duty in a neighbouring parish, I was suddenly sent for, and to my surprise, and I might say disappointment, it was to administer the Last Sacraments to this same girl, whom I had thought fast recovering. Her relations and the doctor again expected the worst. I anointed her, but could not give her Holy Viaticum, as she was quite unconscious. I waited for some time, hoping she might recover

her senses, but all in vain ; her condition became visibly worse.

In this sad circumstance I prostrated before the Blessed Sacrament, and begged the Sacred Heart to grant a few lucid moments to the poor sufferer before her death, in order to enable her to receive Holy Viaticum. After saying another fervent prayer, I approached her and recited a few aspirations for her, when, lo ! she opened her eyes and repeated them after me ; but, alas ! immediately fell back unconscious. From this moment all hopes of her recovery were again abandoned, and with a heavy heart I took the Blessed Sacrament back to the church.

The following day, Sunday, in the afternoon, the father came to inform me that his daughter might be able to go to confession and receive Holy Communion before her death. The Sacred Heart heard our prayers. The next day the girl was able to receive Holy Communion, nor did she die ; on the contrary, from that moment she became perceptibly better. The father made another Novena, and the Sacred Heart has now restored the child to her pious parents.

10. A Priest in North America cured of Heart Disease.

In consequence of over-work in the discharge of my pastoral duties, I was seized with a dangerous attack of the heart on New Year's Day (1882). Inflammation of the throat and loss of voice deprived me of the possibility of fulfilling the duties of my calling, which was all the more urgent, there being few priests to supply the spiritual needs of a comparatively large Catholic population. I had, moreover, the whooping-cough so violently, and the inflammation of the throat was so aggravated, that my friends doubted of my recovery.

Many pious souls of the parish willingly united their prayers with mine, especially the good Sisters, and the children committed to their care. I took advice of the best physicians, but without experiencing any benefit.

Some hoped that if I went to a warmer climate I might recover : so, to please my friends, I tried this expedient ; but, so far from a cure, not even an improvement was perceptible in my health, and, wearied of trying natural remedies, I had recourse to supernatural ones. I therefore began a Novena in honour of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and to St. Joseph, in union

with my fellow-priests, the Sisters of St. Joseph, and several pious souls of the parish. God heard our prayers. On New Year's Day (1883) I was able to preach a short sermon, and by the end of the Novena an extraordinary improvement was visible. I was again able to undertake all the duties of the ministry.

By the advice of my friends, I delayed the publication of this grace until my cure proved itself to be of a permanent character. Thanks be to God, it lasted during the holy season of Lent until Easter, when (perhaps owing partly to extra work at Easter-tide, the bad weather, but more, I fear, having delayed so long the promised publication) I had a relapse in the spring, but not of so serious a nature as the first attack, and I trust my Glorious Intercessors will completely restore my health, if it be God's Holy will.

II. Innocence brought to Light.

In the year 1881 our family was thrown into great trouble on account of one of my brothers being wrongfully accused of a fraudulent transaction in business. The real offender had escaped to a foreign country, and consequently the case could not be tried as long as his whereabouts were unknown. Meanwhile my poor brother was

awaiting his trial in prison ; we were all in great anxiety on his account, lest this misfortune might break down his health, should he have to languish many months in his confinement. In this great distress we all united in earnest prayer for his deliverance, having recourse to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and had the intention inscribed in the *Messenger*. After some little time we heard that the fugitive had been found, and the trial was to take place at last. Two of the brothers were present, and they told us afterwards it was dreadful to see what a sad plight the defendant was in, looking more like a corpse than a living being. But his frank and open declaration, and the candour of his replies, soon convinced all of his innocence, and, thanks to the Sacred Heart, he obtained his acquittal. All during the trial I had had a lamp burning before an image of the Sacred Heart, so we did not hesitate to ascribe this favour to Its intervention.

12. *The Last Moments.*

'A little more than ten years ago,' writes a priest, 'I was suddenly called to a sick man in a neighbouring hospital. Although I had seen him several times previously, the doctors had not thought him in any immediate danger; but on

this day the nurses had become alarmed, as delirium had set in, and he was suffering from inflammation of the lungs. He had succumbed so quickly under this last sickness that they gave him only twenty-four hours to live. I explained to him the dangerous state he was in, and tried to persuade him to receive the Last Sacraments, but he would not listen to me, saying he 'was not so ill, and there was time enough; he would go to confession when he was better and could go to the church.' I next tried to make him understand the salutary effects of the Sacraments, that receiving them might accelerate his return to health; but all in vain, I always received the same answer. I further tried to impress upon him the terrible truths of our holy religion, the Last Judgment, and so on, tempering it at the same time with the remembrance of God's infinite mercy and love; but even to this appeal he only answered that for four-and-twenty years he had always 'got along,' and that he expected to do so again. With this he uttered a flood of blasphemies too terrible to repeat. I saw now the character with whom I had to deal. He had said he 'wished to settle his affairs with God alone,' and so I made up my mind to leave him as he wished with 'God alone,' and thus, somewhat sadly, I left him and went straight to the tabernacle where the Sacred

Heart awaits day and night silently expecting our petitions for sinners, and throwing myself on my knees, I said, 'Behold, O Sacred Heart, here indeed is a true case for the glorification of Thy Name.' Then, turning to our Blessed Mother, I besought her to intercede for us to obtain this end from the Sacred Heart, and I promised to make a Novena, and to publish the conversion in the *Messenger* should my prayers be granted. My courage and confidence renewed, I returned to my obdurate patient, but found him in much the same frame of mind. However, the good Sister who attended him had gained this much, that he allowed her to put a medal of the Immaculate Conception round his neck, whereas before he had positively refused to take a crucifix from me.

'The victory is as good as gained!' I exclaimed with delight. He next agreed to look at a crucifix, but after a time I saw too well he was not in earnest, for he would hear nothing of confession. Towards midnight I again tried to win him to make his peace with God, but the very mention of the Sacraments infuriated him to such a degree that I saw it was best to withdraw. Having passed half the night till early morning in this manner, I at length went home to say my Mass, recommending this hardened case to the Sacred Heart, our Blessed Lady, and to St. Joseph,

whose feast it was that day. Immediately after Mass I returned to the hospital, but again I was to be bitterly disappointed. This time I left word I would not return till the afternoon, so that if he wished to go to confession he might send for me or for one of the other priests.

Hardly had I finished my dinner when a boy came running to the house, saying: 'O Father, someone is dying at the hospital; you must come at once.'

It was as he said, for the poor man's agony had already begun, but, thank God, he was quite conscious and able to speak. After a few encouraging words, I asked him if he was now ready to go to confession, and to my intense relief he readily acquiesced. God's mercy had done the work man's words had failed to do, and after a good confession he pressed the crucifix to his lips, and even begged to receive his Lord. Having anointed him, he died most peacefully, and there was joy not only in heaven, but also on earth, for the poor sinner that had done penance.

13. *A Parish in Distress.*

Some years ago a clerical friend of mine suddenly fell ill from a violent nervous attack, and to such a state was he reduced that death or

lunacy seemed inevitable. For a few months he was quite a broken-down man, physically and mentally. He was possessed with such great fears that he could never be left alone for a minute, and he who had before been particularly active and energetic was now almost helpless. Of course, in this state he could not attend to his pastoral duties. This distressed his little flock very much, especially as, in consequence of there being very few priests just at this time, the Bishop could only send a substitute occasionally. All this combined, increased the mental troubles of the good priest, who felt keenly the needs of his people through his own inability.

In their trouble at length his relations and parishioners turned to the Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Lourdes. Novenas were begun, public Devotions were arranged, and one holy soul generously promised to take upon herself some suffering if the Sacred Heart would restore the health of their priest who had always worked so zealously in their midst. For it had become quite evident that human remedies were of no avail, and that God alone could work the cure; nor were they wrong in their surmise, for his relations, having spent the whole of the night before the Epiphany in prayer, found to their joy that that very morning health had been restored

to the good priest, who was perfectly able from that day forth to attend to his ministerial duties. It is needless to record the delight of the people, and the many thanksgivings that followed.

14. *Persuaded at Last.*

A child of a mixed marriage and brought up a Protestant, her father's religion, at the age of twelve felt herself strongly urged by an interior voice to become a Catholic, for which purpose she sought out a priest, and asked him to instruct her in the true faith. He willingly acquiesced in her proposal, and as her instructions proceeded the good and innocent girl wished more than ever to be received into the one true fold.

At the beginning of one Lent she earnestly asked permission to join the classes preparing for their first confession and Communion. Her father gave her the required leave, and all seemed prospering. As for herself, she showed a zeal and perseverance beyond her years. But a gift like the gift of faith is never so easily purchased, and even a child's stability has to be tried in the furnace of contradiction. The old enemy took alarm, and succeeded in filling the father's mind with suspicions, through the instigation of unbelieving and fanatical associates, so that he

declared that none of his children should ever become Catholics. She suffered much also from the insults and derisions of her brothers and sisters.

The obstacles put in her way seemed insurmountable, and she had reached the utmost of her powers of endurance by the end of the Lent in which she had hoped to be received. But there is One to Whom nothing is impossible, nor do any obstacles stand in His way when His time comes to send the necessary aid. And so it proved in this case, for at the end of a Novena to the Sacred Heart, and asking our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph to second their petition (for twelve friends had joined her in thus praying), the father went himself to the priest, and gave his consent to having his child baptized and brought up a Catholic.

The grant of this request was duly published as promised in the conditions, and the child is still a very happy little Catholic. We hope this true story may incite other children to follow the good inspirations they receive, and not to be deterred by apparent obstacles, which are only the artifices of the Evil One.

15. An Aged Sinner.

In an institution founded for girls who are out of situations, and who may remain until they can find work, there was a particularly nice girl, who was in considerable trouble about her father. She confided to the Sister who had charge of this charitable foundation that her father had obstinately refused to be converted. He had been for many years a servant in a gentleman's family, but for the last few months he had been very ill; yet he would hear nothing about religion, although for thirty-three years—the whole of his married life—he had never approached the Sacraments, and, further, he would often speak in a very insulting manner of priests and holy things, and swore that he would never allow a priest to come near him, for he would rather die without such assistance.

His daughter was very faithful in performing her religious duties, but he only ascribed this to bad motives. She, poor girl, had prayed for many years, having Novenas and Masses said in honour of the Sacred Heart and our Blessed Lady, but apparently of no use. Now that her father was approaching his end, she was naturally more than ever anxious about his welfare.

Having poured out her trouble to this kind

religious, she advised her to redouble her prayers to the Sacred Heart, and to promise to publish the favour if granted. They began a Novena for this purpose, and by the third day her confidence was so reassured that she almost felt her prayer had been granted. But she had not the courage to go to her father herself, as in her former endeavours he had only driven her away with rough words, so she commissioned a friend to go for her, and try to persuade him to see a priest.

This messenger of peace took with her a picture of Mater Admirabilis, and put it under his pillow before she began her charitable undertaking, and behold! it only needed a few kind words to persuade the now softened man to accept the offices of a priest. He eventually received all the Last Sacraments with every sign of contrition and devotion.

May Jesus Christ be praised!

16. *A Curious Bargain.*

A public official in Prussia, on his deathbed, besought his wife, who was a resolute Protestant, to embrace the Catholic religion, of which he himself was a fervent member, wishing that his children, who were all Catholics, should have the advantage and blessing of being brought up by a

Catholic mother. His wife consented on the condition of his recovery, saying that if he died it would be a sign it was not the will of God she should change. Her husband died without having extracted anything further from her. Nevertheless, she would often accompany her children to the Catholic church, and she even followed with great attention the sermons during a mission that was being held in the town. These made a great impression on her; but, in spite of all this, she refused to take the final step, and did her utmost to stifle the voice of conscience.

So things went on for some time, when one of her daughters, leaving home, heard of the many graces being obtained through the invocation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She immediately recommended the conversion of her mother to the prayers of this Apostolate, and in a few weeks from that time she had the felicity to learn that her mother intended to be received into the true Church. Although she put it off from time to time, in the end she answered the Divine Voice, which had been calling at the door of her heart so long. But the patience of the Heart of Jesus is truly inexhaustible.

17. Despondency cured.

About fourteen or fifteen years ago a terrible thunderstorm caused great havoc in a small village ; amongst other disasters a house was struck by lightning, and two of its inmates killed on the spot. The fright and grief which this trouble gave to the remaining members of the family was very great, but time, which softens and wears away the most severe trials, produced a sort of calm on the mother and some of the children ; one of the sons alone seemed unable to get over the shock, and remained inconsolable, his excessive grief degenerating into a serious kind of melancholy, which distressed his relations sorely. They on their part did all in their power to rouse him and brighten his spirits, but their efforts were not crowned with success. Finding his mental condition getting much worse, his sister cast herself at the feet of Jesus, and implored help and alleviation from His Sacred Heart. Beginning a Novena for this grace, she promised to publish her brother's recovery in the pages of the *Messenger*. In a fortnight from that time the poor sufferer began to show some interest in his daily life, and an inclination to talk and go about, which he had not attempted to do for months. In a little time his former good spirits

returned, and he was able to resume his work, evincing much pleasure in all his usual avocations. Such a speedy and effectual answer to their prayer was felt to be, if not entirely miraculous, certainly one of those special favours which are granted to the prayer of faith, and call forth very earnest thanksgiving on the part of the recipients.

18. *A Drunkard converted.*

Amongst other spiritual favours granted through appealing to the Sacred Heart is the following from a priest. A peasant in my parish has been married for thirty years. The first eight years of her married life were passed happily and contentedly enough. The husband was industrious, and the wife thrifty, a good housewife, and of a peaceful disposition. Their little farm was free from debt, and they, moreover, managed to put by some savings. After a few happy years all was changed for the worse. The husband fell in with bad companions, who led him on to indulge in drinking spirits, and finally he became a confirmed drunkard. The seventeen years which followed were years of the most utter misery. The husband continued to frequent the public-house, would attend to nothing, think of nothing but satisfying his depraved longing for drink;

wife and children were quite forgotten, and, as is always the case, the evil consequences of such conduct, discord, ill-usage, want and misery, fell on the little family. The saddest days were when the man would go, as occurred now and then, to the Sacraments; after confession he betook himself to the public-house, behaved as badly as usual, and the next day received Holy Communion. For some time he had had the intention of setting fire to the house, and killing himself, thus reducing his family to beggary. One day he executed his evil design, but the fire was extinguished, and his attempt to kill himself happily frustrated. His wife and children prayed earnestly for him day by day; still matters became worse, but in their greatest need help came at last.

It happened that a compassionate lady acquainted the unhappy wife with the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, and this very number contained an answer to prayer in a similar distressing case. After reading it, the poor woman regained courage and confidence, had her husband enrolled in the Apostleship of Prayer, said the daily aspiration for his conversion, and, animated with confidence, had recourse to the Divine Heart of Jesus, and besought the intercession of Our Lady, St. Joseph, St. John, and St. Anthony of Padua. At last her

husband's conduct improved, and continued to do so day by day. He still drinks a little, but has left off frequenting the public-house, attends to his work, practises his religious duties, allows his wife to fulfil her household tasks in peace, and thus the family is now saved from ruin. The wife is fully convinced that no one helped or could have helped in this case but the merciful Heart of Jesus.

19. A Mother Seriously Ill restored to Health.

'Some days ago,' writes a correspondent, 'I received a letter from home, in which I was asked to interest myself in having a thanksgiving published, and I enclose the letter itself as a testimonial. It runs as follows : "Dearest Uncle, Loved, praised, honoured, known, and glorified at all times and everywhere be the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. If, my dearest uncle, our hopes have not been as fully realized as we should have desired and expected this Easter, I should not have less cause to praise the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for I have only this Merciful Heart to thank that I am not now motherless, and obliged to acquaint you with the saddest event that could have befallen me. The weather at present is very unhealthy, and much

sickness prevails in the neighbourhood ; many people die, old and young. The illness begins with a severe cold, which in three or four hours is changed to a burning fever ; but, in spite of this, the feet and legs remain cold, perfect numbness of the limbs ensues, coughing, spitting of blood, and obstruction of the respiratory organs. Many succumb in three days. My mother was taken ill on March 15 ; I was away in the day-time, but returned home in the evening. That night I was overtaken by a snowstorm, and, in spite of my utmost endeavours to resist the violence of the wind, I was thrown into a ditch. There I lay for more than an hour, until the storm had abated. I had become so stiff that it was with difficulty I was able to move ; but after a time my limbs regained their elasticity, and I resumed my way. Upon arriving home about nine o'clock, tired and numb with cold, I found mother sitting by the fire, ill and shivering with the cold of the fever.

“ ‘Ah,’ she said, ‘ I am so cold that I have not been able to cook anything, and I did not expect to see you this stormy night.’

“ I said nothing of my accident, but, forgetting my fatigue and all else, I hastened to prepare a cup of coffee for my mother, warmed her bed, and settled her for the night. Towards midnight

she lay in a burning fever ; the upper part of her body was very heated, but her feet remained cold and numb in spite of rubbing and warming them. For three days the fever increased, notwithstanding the remedies used, her eyes became glazed, and her features altered. In my anguish I earnestly begged the Sacred Heart of Jesus to have mercy on my mother, spending half an hour in prayer and tears. Returning to the sick-room, I found the dear patient sleeping peacefully, which continued for three hours. Upon awakening, she declared she was quite well. Already an improvement was evident, which increased from day to day, although she is still very weak and confined to her bed. I have made a promise if mother gets quite well again to have it published in the *Messenger*, and I beg you, dear uncle, to undertake it for me." "

20. *The Sacred Heart helps a Workman Spiritually and Temporally.*

Several times I have been out of work for three or four months together, and this so distressed my mother, who was also obliged to earn her living, that she became quite melancholy, and at length very ill. It seemed at last as though I was of no use in any situation ; I worked in a super-

ficial manner, and took no interest in my labour. I had had several good situations, but had been dismissed for the above reasons, so that I was finally obliged to take to manufacturing, in which I made but little progress. A friend acquainted me with the *Messenger*; I promised to publish my thanks if the Sacred Heart provided me with work and enabled me to do it properly. Thanks and praise are due to this benevolent Heart; I *was* helped, I am now in a good situation, and the head-master is so satisfied with me that he has already raised my wages twice in six months; and by the assistance of the Sacred Heart I hope to become a proficient merchant, and the joy and consolation of my mother. The Sacred Heart is also helping me in another way, namely, to overcome that anger which is sometimes so strong in me that I am beside myself with rage, and my family have much to suffer on my account. I am now praying fervently to the meek Heart of Jesus, and feel myself wonderfully strengthened. My anger is disappearing, and soon I hope to be entirely cured by the Heart of Jesus.

21. *How a Person was brought from Death to Life.*

On October 4, 1882, I was going to work in perfect health, when I was suddenly seized with

so violent a pain in my left foot as to be scarcely able to stand, and I had to drag myself in this strait for the space of half an hour to the village. I was confined to my bed for three weeks, and became so nervous as to entirely lose my appetite; medicine was of no avail. An abscess formed in my right arm, which had to be lanced. I suffered so much that I could neither eat nor sleep; the arm swelled to such an extent and became so weak that I was scarcely able to move a finger; but matters got worse. On the evening of March 2 I had so severe an attack of cramp in my heart that the doctor, who was quickly summoned, declared my life to be in danger, and the Last Sacraments were at once administered. I resigned myself to God's will, praying, however, to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, St. Joseph and St. Anthony, to save me from so painful a death. Almighty God heard my prayer, and after seven hours of severe suffering, when I believed myself suffocating, the cramp left me as quickly as it had come. I was so weak as to be unable to speak aloud, and the doctor said I should never be able to bear another more violent attack. But on the 8th instant I was seized with pectoral cramp, which pressed nearer and nearer the heart towards evening; at midnight it seemed as though my heart was surrounded with thorns. In my

anguish I implored the help of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and St. Joseph. The doctor began to fear I should have a stroke; but after thirteen hours' hard fighting between life and death (my relations were all round me, expecting my last hour; the blessed candle even lay ready prepared), I suddenly became quiet, and the struggle ceased. God in His Infinite goodness had, by the intercession of His holy Mother, restored my arm to me, which had been considered incurable, so that in a few months I was able to make the sign of the Cross for the first time. Praise and Thanksgiving every moment to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

22. The Fortunate Election of a Mayor.

Already three times, owing to the influence of the Free-thinking party, and the over-anxious dependence on its favour, a man had been elected as mayor of our city who was an enemy of the Church, and each time for the space of six years. Almighty God knows all we had to suffer during the eighteen years of this arbitrary tenure of office, protected as he was by higher authority. Not long ago his time of mayoralty expired, and a new election was about to take place. Distress forced us to pray, and several persons made a

Novena in honour of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and to St. Joseph. On the election-day they had a Mass said in honour of the Sacred Heart, and also promised to publish their gratitude in the *Messenger* if the election was favourable for the good cause. Our party conquered, but evidently with supernatural help. We had reckoned upon having the majority by three votes, but six citizens whose votes we had expected failed us at the last moment; whereas six other citizens, who were of the Liberal party, and originally hostile to our cause, voted for our candidates. Our most heartfelt thanks are due to the Most Sacred Heart, Who so gently directed the wills of our opponents.

23. *The Story of an Invalid Student and a Happy Death.*

As I am a great lover and a constant reader of the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, I never omit to notice the Divine graces which this Sacred Heart has granted in His love and mercy to us poor mortals; and yet, to my shame, I must confess that I once for a long time did neglect to honour It, by delaying to publish two great favours which I had obtained through Its assistance.

In 1883, I was preparing to go up for my

examinations; I had passed through all the lower classes in the College, but my prospects were poor enough. I had no very special talent, and during the whole of my college term I had been more or less sickly, on account of which my assiduity, as well as capability for study, had considerably diminished. With difficulty I had managed to enter the highest class, but no sooner had I reached this distinction than, to crown all my other miseries, my sight gave way, one of my eyes became almost blind, while the other was so weak that I was compelled to give up my studies entirely for a whole month; and for a considerable time after this I could only apply myself to reading with extreme caution, for fear of losing my eyesight altogether; added to this my heart, which had given me trouble for some time past, increased my sufferings day by day. During these sad and discouraging circumstances the time for my examination approached, but thanks to the kind and prudent guidance of my confessor, I was comparatively calm and resigned, and did my utmost to be quiet and composed in order not to aggravate my sufferings; but I own I felt disheartened when I contemplated the future, more especially as strange symptoms of illness had troubled me so much the first part of the day that study was rendered out of the question.

A short time before the dreaded examination began, I confided my distress of mind and forebodings of an unfavourable result to a friend, who, as soon as he heard my trouble, advised me to begin at once a Novena to the Sacred Heart. There only remained eight days before the examination took place, but 'Be assured,' he said, 'the Sacred Heart of Jesus will certainly help you.' Without hesitation I followed the advice of this good priest, and wonderful was the help I obtained. I not only passed successfully, but the whole time my heart was calm and full of confidence, and the fears arising from my poor state of health no longer disturbed me. Thanks be to God!

The second favour I received through this Fountain of Mercy was as follows:

During my holidays I had been the constant companion of one of my relations, who for a very long time had been suffering from a most painful internal disease. Everything had been done for him; not a remedy left untried to restore his health, but it was of no avail; it was apparent that death was not far off. Then I thought of the Sacred Heart, Who alone could, and might, save our poor patient, or if not this, would procure for him a happy death. I spoke first to the invalid of my intention, and then persuaded the whole

household to join with me in praying, either for his recovery or for a happy death, promising to publish the favour in the *Messenger* if our Lord deigned to grant our request. Most ardently and humbly did our prayers ascend to our Divine Lord, but He chose for my dear friend a happy death rather than to leave him longer with us. A singularly beautiful death it was, as the parish priest assured me, writing to me some time afterwards.

'I have been present at many deaths,' he said, 'but in no one have I seen so little fear or so much joy.'

Others said the same, adding, 'They would be content to die as he had died.'

In these two instances truly the loving Heart of Jesus showed itself as the Strength of the weak and the Refuge of the dying.

24. A Death-bed Repentance.

Another very beautiful incident I wish to relate, which, I think, will particularly encourage my fellow-priests in the too often disheartening duty of attending the dying who will not listen, even in their last moments, to the warnings of Holy Church. This history will incite them to hope for especial aid in this hour when ordinary words have lost their power to win the dying soul.

One day as I was walking, with a light and joyful heart, to the house of a sick person, who had always lived a very exemplary life, an old woman met me and inquired abruptly to whom was I going so quickly. Having satisfied her curiosity, she went on to say: 'As you are on your way to visit the sick, you might as well drop in also on poor Job, who has been seriously attacked by sickness.'

'But,' I said, 'he is young, and does not look as if he were dying.'

'Maybe,' answered she, 'he does not look like a dying man, nor does he wish to die, but I assure you that he will never get up again.'

When she said this all my light-heartedness disappeared, for I must tell you that Job was a youth of about twenty years of age, of iron frame, and of an equally hard and obstinate character, not being able to stand the least contradiction. I had heard a great deal about him from others, but little of good; I felt a strong reluctance to visit this fellow, but trusting in the assistance of the Sacred Heart, I conquered my repugnance and went straight to the poor man, breathing this silent prayer, 'Lord, show me now the wonders of Thy grace.' Contrary to my expectation, I was received most cordially, the invalid even expressing the wish that I should visit him often.

Day after day I went to spend some time by his side, talking to him on the most indifferent topics, and sometimes when I took his poor hot hand in mine to feel his pulse I besought the Sacred Heart of Jesus to give His grace to this sick soul. Occasionally I ventured to show him the pictures of the saints, and reminded him that they were examples to us of patience under suffering; or if his pains were more than usually acute, I advised him to ask for relief from the Sacred Heart. Further I dare not go, as I saw my impetuous patient would not brook any stronger admonition; I could only hope that the Heart of Jesus would inspire him with the desire to make a good Confession, and my prayers and hopes were not confounded.

For some time I was unable to visit the sick man, but this was for him the time of grace. During my absence his longing for the assistance of a priest had daily increased, and my poor Job timidly told me that 'he could not rid himself of the thought of confession.' It is impossible to describe the joy I felt at this announcement; I understood more clearly now those words of our Blessed Saviour, 'There will be more joy in heaven on one sinner that doth penance, than on ninety-nine just who need not penance.'

With most edifying sentiments of compunction

he made a general confession, by which means he prepared his soul for a worthy reception of his Lord, and once more in Holy Communion rested his head on the Sacred Heart of the Good Shepherd, where at length he found true joy, peace, and patience.

Purified by repeated confessions and strengthened by Holy Viaticum, he awaited his death, fully resigned to the holy will of God. After a most painful illness of six months he gave back his soul into the hands of his Creator, where, we trust, eternal rest was granted to him, through the merciful compassion of the God of all consolation.

25. A Workman restored to Health.

The following story is one of many instances where the Sacred Heart has most benignantly come to the aid of those in great bodily peril.

While blasting stones in a quarry, a poor workman, who thought himself protected by an overhanging rock, was suddenly dashed to the ground by the explosion of some powder which had been left close by the mine. Large masses of stone were hurled into the air, and in their descent so mutilated the poor man that hardly any sign of life was to be found in him; his whole body was covered with blood, his speech failed him, and he

was in such a deplorable condition that the doctors had given up all hope of saving his life, as it was very evident he was suffering from a serious internal injury past human science.

Some of his friends, seeing him in this sad state, had recourse to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, promising to make known through the pages of the *Messenger* the account of his recovery, should they obtain their petition. With great faith and devotion they procured a small piece of an 'Agnus Dei,' which was given to the poor sufferer to swallow. Very soon an improvement became visible, and indeed so quickly and steadily did the invalid regain his health and strength that he was able to take up his former duties at the quarry, and to work with renewed energy and vigour.

26. *Poverty relieved.*

'For six and twenty years,' writes a grateful recipient of a favour received through the intervention of the *Messenger*, 'I had been living in foreign countries, and for eighteen long years I had never returned to my old home, during almost the whole of that time fighting with the most rigid poverty. Last autumn, being suddenly thrown out of work, I travelled hither and thither for eight weeks in search of employment. Falling

sick, however, I had to be taken to a hospital, where, apparently by accident, but, as it will be seen later, by the merciful designs of Providence, the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart* was put into my hands. Whilst reading it, my Angel Guardian inspired me with the thought of making a Novena to the Sacred Heart, in order that I might find the means of earning my livelihood. I further promised that, should I have my petition granted, I would publish its accomplishment in the *Messenger*, and say every day till my death an "Our Father," in honour of this most compassionate Heart.

'At this most distressing time I had not the slightest intention of returning to my native place, and yet our dear Lord so disposed events that I was forced to go home, much against my inclination. No sooner had I arrived than I made up my mind to leave again; in such a hurry was I to depart that on the second day I had procured from the magistrate of my village a passport, intending to go back at the next opportunity; but it was to be otherwise, for by the unexpected assistance of some charitable persons I was enabled to begin business on my own account. True, it is not a very flourishing one, but it is sufficient for me to maintain myself and young family.

‘Every morning and evening I pray to the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and to my Angel Guardian, for help and protection, and I am firmly convinced they will never abandon me.’

27. *At the Last Moment.*

A priest gives the following touching account of the softening influence of the Sacred Heart on a soul under his care.

‘A poor invalid woman in my parish,’ he writes, ‘was suffering severely from some disease of the lungs; all hope had been given up by the doctors, and she had received the Last Sacraments some three weeks previously; yet she seemed unable to realize herself that she was in a precarious state, fully believing that she would recover.

‘When I went to visit her about this time, I found her suffering not only in body, but also in mind, for she seemed weighed down with the greatest depression. I endeavoured to persuade her to make some short aspirations of love and patience, but she would not even listen to me, saying fretfully that it always made her worse to have prayers to say, and she had prayed enough. I told her as gently as I could she need not say them aloud, but say some short prayers to herself from time to time. I then asked if she did not wish to receive Holy Communion once more.

"When I regain my health again I will," was all I could get out of her, and so with a sad heart I had to leave her without getting her to say even so much as one prayer. The only thing I could do I did, and that was to sprinkle her with holy water. My anxiety and distress were the greater as the people in whose house she was lodging were even more averse to my visits than the poor woman was herself. In my sorrow on account of this infirm soul, I turned to our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph, beginning a Novena in their honour, asking them to obtain from the Heart of Jesus, the safe refuge of sinners, grace for my poor patient, and so touch her heart that she would consent to receive her Saviour before her death. On the second day of the Novena I went to see her, and found her very much worse, and I knew she had not long to live; so I urged her again and again to receive the Holy Sacraments, but she only said :

"What, must I go every three or four weeks?"

'But next day towards evening she at length consented to receive Holy Viaticum, which she did with very great devotion, and next morning she had breathed her last. Oh, how merciful and gentle is that loving Heart to all, but wonderful in Its sweetness and condescension to those who for so long a time have rudely repulsed Its

proffered visits! This little anecdote should increase and strengthen our confidence in the mercy and power of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; for if we would only learn to know It, then we should learn to love It.'

28. *Three Little Proofs to show the Efficacy of the Sacred Heart.*

I.

In a certain parish in Germany there are about fifty families who subscribe to the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*. This little periodical is certainly not as much appreciated as it deserves, for from its perusal alone little seeds, as it were, have fallen from time to time on good ground, and produced abundant fruit. Many graces have been obtained, and the first germs of Devotion to the Sacred Heart have been implanted, by means of this pamphlet. Many remarkable if not always miraculous interventions of Providence can trace their source to the reading of the *Messenger*, or the promise of publishing in its pages the answer to the petitions which have ascended to the Throne of Mercy.

Thus lately has come before our notice the deliverance of a family from starvation and ruin. The eldest son, who has just completed his time

of serving in the army, and certainly is not of a credulous turn of mind, has described to us the distressed state to which his family was reduced, and the wonderful way in which their wants were alleviated. He said he was quite convinced that it was purely a supernatural source from which their help had come.

His mother, who had been a widow for many years, had carried on the management of their little farm ever since the death of her husband; it had been mortgaged for £50, and quite unexpectedly they were told they must pay this great sum. But it was not forthcoming, and there was no one who would lend them the necessary amount. The day fixed for the payment was approaching nearer and nearer, and the ruin of the family seemed inevitable.

In a time of pressing need, such as the one we are recording, one is tempted to lay hold of any means to avert the evils of poverty.

As the son at this time was still in the army, his mother had been obliged to borrow money from a usurer, being unable to obtain it by any other means, and she was paying a moderate percentage. This moneylender was willing to procure for her an additional sum of £40, but at an exorbitant interest. The poor widow was on the point of agreeing to these shameful conditions,

but previous to this business being finally settled the family had agreed to make a Novena to the Sacred Heart to assist them with light and strength. Before the nine days had elapsed the necessary succour arrived: a stranger came forward and offered the poor widow £50 at the ordinary rate of interest. It is needless to tell of the joy and gratitude of the whole family, and it is by their express wish, as a token of thanksgiving, that we have related their story.

II.

Our second narrative is of a somewhat different nature, but none the less a signal example of the watchfulness of our Lord's Sacred Heart over those whom He has chosen for Himself.

In the beginning of the year 1884 I had fully made up my mind to dedicate myself entirely to the Divine service, by embracing a religious life. I own I had not very great obstacles to overcome in order to carry out my cherished desire, but still I had a number of small difficulties, and amongst others the trial of waiting while all business matters were being settled. Included in this latter was the giving up of a public employment, which necessitated a risk to my future prospects should I fail in my vocation. The Order I had chosen was a strict one, and I dreaded far

more the giving up of my free will than I had done surrendering all my worldly advantages. About this time I had been reading in the *Messenger* the numerous graces and answers to prayer, and I felt strongly impelled to recommend my present needs to the charity of that Divine Heart, faithfully promising to publish the answer to my petition, and I am now keeping that promise, writing my grateful acknowledgment of the munificent favours granted to me; for I have been given the grace to surmount all my difficulties, and I am at this present moment a happy Spouse of Jesus Christ. ‘May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere praised !’

III.

Although it is now more than ten years since the following event took place, it has ever remained impressed on my memory, and for the greater glory of God, and the interests of Jesus, I wish to bring it before the public.

It was on June 26, 1884, that I was summoned to the bedside of a little girl of only eleven years of age, who was suffering from a very severe attack of diphtheria; the doctors had pronounced her to be in a very critical condition. Under these circumstances, I heard her confession, and intended, if she was not better the following day,

to bring her Holy Communion; but from this moment she rallied, and in a short time was well enough to go about as usual. However, on July 16, her little brother came running to me in great grief, saying his sister had been suddenly taken ill, and the doctor had given up all hope. When the boy arrived I was in the act of reading the *Messenger*, and had been much struck with the account of some fresh favours and benefits received quite lately. Full of these thoughts, I went straight to the church, and with great confidence recommended the dying child to the merciful Heart of our Redeemer, promising for the greater honour of His Divine Majesty to publish in the *Messenger* the recovery of our little patient should it be granted. I then went to the sorrowing family, and persuaded the parents to join me in a Novena for that end. The next day I took her Holy Communion, which was the first time our Divine Lord had visited this little one of His flock. On the third day of the Novena there was a slight improvement perceptible; each day as the Novena progressed the invalid increased in strength, the pains diminished, and on the last day she left her bed, and was running about quite bright and cheerfully. The parents' joy was very great, and it is with their consent that I have contributed this item as a little token

of their gratitude to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Lover of children.

29. The Sacred Heart our Helper.

From my earliest youth it has been my lot to drink of the cup of sorrow and of sickness ; the trial of weak health was all the more bitter as it proved an obstacle to my earnest longing for religious life. My last hopes of serving God in a peaceful cloister were shattered before I had gone through the year of canonical novitiate. My sad condition was the more deplorable as the state of my health made me unfit for any situation, although many kind patrons were at hand who would have obtained employment for me had I been in a fit condition.

I made one Novena after another to different saints, but all in vain. It seemed as if Heaven were closed to my prayer, or, rather, that all the glory was reserved for the Sacred Heart. At the end of last February my confidence revived once more, and with lively faith I began another Novena to the Sacred Heart and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, promising to assist at two Masses, to receive Holy Communion, and to perform certain other devotions, also that I would have the favour published in the *Messenger*. This time I

felt much encouraged, and in fact I had not the least doubt but that my request would be granted.

Nor were my hopes disappointed, for on the fourth day I received the news that a suitable situation had become vacant. I applied and obtained it, and at the beginning of March I entered and began my service. This speedy relief in my trouble I can but ascribe to the merciful assistance of the Sacred Heart, all the more so as from that time my health has improved steadily, and so far has been no hindrance to my work. All praise and glory to the most merciful and compassionate Heart of Jesus, Whose Help is never sought for in vain !

30. Perseverance in a Vocation under Severe Trials.

A respectable girl of about nineteen years of age had for some time felt an irresistible call to the religious life. Her spiritual director, wishing to test her and ascertain whether she had a true vocation, made some demur ; but at last he told her it would be advisable for her to choose an Order in which the life was not too hard. She therefore felt called to join the Sisters of Charity. The priest agreed, and applied to the Sister Superior, who was perfectly willing to receive the

new postulant. Her relations and friends tried indeed to put many obstacles in the way of her vocation, but by the grace of God all hindrances were at length overcome. Like the bird escaping from the snare of the hunter, she flew from the world with great joy and swiftness, and found a happy home in the house of God where she entered upon her trial.

She had hardly been four months in the convent when she was admitted among the postulants, where her conduct gave so much satisfaction that soon she was entrusted with the care of a large hospital ward, where the most renowned surgeons daily performed many serious operations. But the labour was so great that it overpowered her strength, and twice she fell ill from exhaustion.

About two months before the time fixed for the clothing her director was surprised to receive from the Sister Superior the sad intimation that, to her great regret, she was obliged to dismiss the promising postulant because her mental powers were deranged. In spite of all her entreaties and her resistance to leave, the poor girl was fetched by her mother and taken home, without any prospect or hope of ever attaining the goal for which she had been striving so earnestly for years. The Superior declared she was convinced that the

poor girl would never recover her reason. About a week after her return home she sought her former director, who was not a little astonished in perceiving not the slightest signs of insanity, but rather a freshness and brightness of mind that strangely contrasted with her broken state of health, the consequence of the hard labours, frequent night-watching with the sick, and other hardships she had gone through in the hospital. The good priest was moved with the deepest compassion, and he strongly urged the poor sufferer not to lose courage, but to turn with great love and confidence to God, to begin a Novena to the most merciful Heart of Jesus, in order to obtain light and grace to know whether she was really called to embrace the religious state or not, adding that if such was the Divine Will the Sacred Heart would undoubtedly still find a little corner for her in some convent or other.

And so it came to pass, for in a very short time, in answer to her prayer, she was admitted into another convent. Hardly five months after her first failure she was accepted in another house of the Sisters of Charity, where in due time she had the unspeakable joy of being of the number of the happy brides who were solemnly led to the altar to receive the religious habit. Full of heart-felt gratitude to the most loving Heart of our

Lord, Who has so mercifully granted her heart's desire, the happy novice wishes to return public thanks in these pages, and to proclaim the goodness and power of the Sacred Heart.

31. *The Bell of the Sacred Heart.*

The parish church of N—— had hitherto but one small bell, and it had often occurred to many in the parish that some large bells ought to be procured, yet no one believed that this wish would ever be realized because there were so many obstacles in the way. The priest himself was almost convinced that the difficult circumstances that prevailed made the realization of his long-cherished desire almost impossible. He thought, however, that there could be no harm in making some attempt to obtain that object, and had recourse to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, of St. Joseph, and especially to the invincible power of the Sacred Heart, to Whose protection he most earnestly commended this intention. He promised, moreover, that the largest bell procured should be dedicated to the Sacred Heart and bear Its image engraven upon it.

At first the good priest's attempt seemed to fail altogether, but presently the power of the Sacred Heart triumphed in the most wonderful manner.

Suddenly a great enthusiasm manifested itself throughout the parish for procuring a peal of bells at the cost of generous sacrifices of many who had but small means. The sum required was soon collected, and on the Feast of Corpus Christi the large bell of the Sacred Heart resounded for the first time.

The words 'Merciful Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us' were inscribed round the bell. May the soft and melodious tones of this new bell proclaim the love and power of the Heart of Jesus and call a blessing upon this parish whose devotion and self-denial have procured it.

32. *A Thanksgiving from Brazil.*

In consequence of a serious illness, my wife became a prey to a long and lingering fever which painfully manifested itself in turns of burning heat and icy coldness, and during the crisis the shaking of her limbs was so violent as to be heard a long way off. All the medical means, far from affording any relief, seemed rather to increase the sufferings. The poor woman, seeing that all human means were of no avail, prepared herself by devout reception of the Last Sacraments for her passage into eternity. Meanwhile the prospect of my wife's approaching death caused me

the bitterest anxiety. How should I, a poor emigrant, cultivate my plantation and procure bread for my children? I cannot recount all the sad forebodings that passed before my mind in these hours of bitter anguish. In my distress I turned to the Sacred Heart, Whom I had learnt to know through the *Messenger* as the Hope of the hopeless. The Sacred Heart from that moment was supplicated by my family; one Novena after another was fervently made, in which the good Franciscan nuns and many pious friends joined very earnestly. I also made a promise to publish my wife's recovery in the *Messenger* as a favour due to the Sacred Heart. Very soon the sick woman's health began to improve; she is now quite cured, and has recovered her former strength. We are both longing to make known to the *Messenger* this miraculous event. It is true that in consequence of the long illness the right arm and shoulder have become somewhat stiff, which hinders the otherwise healthy woman from resuming her former labours indoors and in the fields. But I trust that this is only a trial for my patience and a spur to go on with our fervent prayers. The loving Heart of Jesus cannot grant a favour by halves, and therefore I feel confident that in God's own good time this trial too will be taken away.

33. Work and Bread obtained.

Since my conversion to the Catholic Faith, and more especially since I became a member of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, I have always had great confidence in prayer. I have prayed chiefly for my spiritual needs, and if the graces obtained have produced so little fruit, it is to be ascribed only to my perverse nature. It was the will of God that I should leave my beloved town of Christiania, and thus separate myself from my Catholic friends. Arrived here in X—, I was thrown among many impious people, and therefore I longed for the day when the work that brought me here would be ended.

My endeavours to obtain employment in a business where I had been well recommended were all in vain. Everything was against me, and the workmen would have nothing to do with the 'Catholic dog,' as they styled me. Gradually my resources came to an end, and I became sorely perplexed and anxious as to how I should provide for my nine poor little children. Then, for the first time, I turned to the Sacred Heart in a temporal need. I began a Novena, begging also the help of the Holy Mother of God, of St. Joseph and St. Anthony.

Before the end of the Novena, I made one

more attempt, and called at the business-place of a rich Jew, begging him at least to give me work at home, since his workmen would not endure my presence in the workshop. He consented at once. I went on working, and on far better terms than I had been used to. The rich Jew grew more and more friendly and satisfied with my work.

Meanwhile, matters went wrong with the business, and, instigated by the workmen themselves, the master begged me to come back and work again in the shop. Seven men and five women had been employed in the place appointed for me. I will not recount the wicked things that I heard there; but for the three weeks since I returned to the business, I have been less reviled and mocked for being a Catholic, and the swearing and blaspheming that so horrified me at first became, in time, less frequent, for which I gratefully thank the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

34. *An Invalid's Offering.*

It had long been my desire to see a statue of the Sacred Heart in the church of our little town, publicly venerated by the faithful, as it was in many other places. However, I did nothing towards carrying out my desire. In the middle

of October of the preceding year my sister had had three severe illnesses—two doctors doubted of her recovery. We prayed very much for her, and made several Novenas to our Lady of the Sacred Heart and to St. Anthony. On the first Friday of November the illness had reached its climax, and I made a Novena to the Sacred Heart, in which my sister joined as well as she could. I promised, if our request were granted, to buy a statue for the church, and also to publish my sister's cure in the *Messenger*.

On the third day of the Novena the patient's condition improved, and continued to do so; now she is quite well. The doctor considers her recovery wonderful, especially as no sign of the illness remains. I fulfilled my promise as soon as possible, and since the Feast of the Sacred Heart a beautiful statue of the same adorns our little church, to the great joy of the whole congregation. I next fulfilled the duty of publishing this great grace in the *Messenger*, and recommend all when in need or distress to appeal to the Divine Heart of Jesus.

35. '*A Friend in Need is a Friend Indeed.*'

A friend of mine had become almost an unbeliever, and consequently had not been to her

duties for several years. In her case an insufficient religious training and instruction were partly the cause of this. Human respect prevented me influencing her, and, moreover, she knew my religious convictions ; she respected them, but she would probably have avoided my company if I had attempted any reasoning. Her sister had lost the faith, and while in this unhappy state had committed suicide. May God graciously forgive my timidity and mistaken silence ! After her death I bitterly reproached myself, so that if in her case I had made but a slight attempt to influence her, now no consideration restrained my endeavours to convert her surviving sister. Often did I and my sister write to her unreservedly about Almighty God's power, His unsearchable but infinitely wise counsels ; of His love ; that nothing occurs but by a dispensation of His Providence, that in all things He wills what is best for us ; and, lastly, of the consolations which the Holy Ghost offers us. For a long time her answers were only such as pained us. We prayed very fervently to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and in this unfailing Source of grace and mercy we found help. How very differently our friend now expresses herself in her letters. Full of submission to God's holy will, and of trust in His assistance, she now seeks and finds consola-

tion and strength in the practice of the true religion. Last winter she went to her duties for the first time for many years. We have every reason to believe in her sincerity, as when writing to me some weeks ago she said she had again received Holy Communion, and spoke of the joy she had experienced on that occasion.

36. '*All's Well that ends Well.*'

Our dear father, for whom we prayed so long and so earnestly, and who was repeatedly recommended to the prayers of the readers of the *Messenger*, has now gone to his eternal reward. Thanks be to God, the prayers offered for him were efficaciously heard. When he became seriously ill, he ceased uttering those fearful blasphemies in which he used to indulge ; a change came over him, and he desired to receive the Last Sacraments, which he did on the eve of his death and after Mass had been offered to obtain for him a calm and holy end. It was a striking conversion, and a death which gave good hopes of his eternal salvation. The loving intervention of Divine Mercy was very apparent in one circumstance relating to it. The dying man wished the Reverend Father Guardian of the Capuchins to administer the last rites to him. The friar was

absent from home, and would only return on a certain Friday. On the 15th of October our father's condition became so critical that his hours seemed numbered, and one may imagine our sorrow and anxiety: but, contrary to all expectations, the Father Guardian returned. He said he felt an unaccountable anxiety whilst on his visit, and although pressed to remain until his time of absence had expired, he declared he could not do so, as he had no peace of mind and felt he must return home. How loving and kind is the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and how great the love of Mary for poor sinners! To them we owe the Christian death of a father once so pious, but who had fallen away through reading bad books. However, a Christian death compensates for a misspent life, and we thank God indeed for His inexpressible mercy.

37. A Victory over the Old Serpent.

Last month a friend complained to me that he was tormented with dreadful doubts regarding his choice of a state of life. When a child, his day-dreams had been that he should one day be a priest; later on, this thought grew to more definite proportions, and he took great pains in acquiring the necessary knowledge. But what

appeared to the child and the boy as an attainable goal, now seemed to the youth quite unattainable, and the thought of his unworthiness made him shrink from aspiring to that sacred dignity. The enemy of all good took advantage of this time of doubt, and filled his mind with thoughts of discouragement, and tried to persuade him he was not called to be a priest. The brave youth was not baffled, but having recourse to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, earnestly prayed to find a shelter in that most sacred Wound, and to be freed from these distressing thoughts. And as of old those who sought the right of sanctuary were safe from the hands of their pursuers, now did this poor youth find refuge in the Divine Heart of Jesus, and his soul found peace, the old enemy having no more power over him. By my advice he made a Novena to the Sacred Heart, and promised to publish it in the *Messenger* if his petition were granted. The voice of our Saviour spoke plainly to his soul, and now his vocation is quite clear, and he is studying for the priesthood.

38. *Family Happiness.*

I have now greater reason than heretofore to thank the Sacred Heart of Jesus for benefits received ; but I will confine myself to relating one of these answers to prayer.

For some years my husband had become a drunkard, and the deplorable result of this was madness. What the whole family suffered thereby may well be imagined, for my husband neglected all his duties, and was reduced to so low a state that all hope of his ultimate recovery was abandoned. Our relations and friends united with us in praying to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which union of prayer procured help in a manner which surpassed all our expectation. My husband has now so far recovered his senses, and conquered the vice of drink, that he is again able to provide for the family. He realizes the greatness of his sin, and by his conversion has regained the esteem and respect of our neighbours.

39. *Saint Joseph, Friend of the Sacred Heart.*

For some years the Sisters at N—— had been persecuted by a man who used his great influence in the town to hinder the good they tried to effect. Human help failing, they fervently sought St. Joseph's aid, whose powerful patronage they had so often experienced ; but in this case he seemed to be deaf to their prayers. They were much afflicted thereat, but kept up their courage, and continued praying most earnestly for three years. They were all members of the Apostleship of

Prayer, but this summer, becoming acquainted with the *Messenger*, they thought of addressing their petition to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; this inspiration they considered as a warning from St. Joseph, and hastened to comply by beginning a Novena, promising to publish it in the *Messenger* if they were heard, and to have a lamp always burning before the statue of the Sacred Heart in their chapel. During the Devotions candles were burnt daily before It, and also before a picture of the Mother of Sorrows and St. Joseph. The nuns prayed earnestly with ever-increasing confidence, and their faith was strikingly rewarded. On the last day of the Novena their persecutor resigned his office, which act was at once recognised by the authorities. The joy of the Sisters can be imagined, and they at once began a second Novena in thanksgiving, placing the lamp before the statue of the Sacred Heart, and published the grace as soon as possible in the *Messenger*. They recommend all to have Devotion to St. Joseph, who had thus led them to the Source of mercy and grace.

40. *The Holy Sacraments, the Health of the Sick.*

On September 21 my wife fell dangerously ill with inflammation of the lungs. By the 24th

the disease had increased to such an extent that doubts were entertained of her recovery. I besought the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary to cure her, and promised to publish the favour in the *Messenger* if granted. That same evening she received the Last Sacraments, for we feared she would die in the night. However, after receiving Extreme Unction her condition improved, and now, thank God, she is able to leave her bed. The doctor declared her recovery to be unaccountable and remarkable. We therefore desire to publish our gratitude to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in the *Messenger*.

41. *The Tenth Promise fulfilled.*

A French convert relates the history of his conversion as follows: 'I have retained but few recollections of my childhood, but among these few is the remembrance of a picture of the Sacred Heart which hung above a statue of the Mother of God in our sitting-room, and before which I was taught to pray. This picture fascinated me because my mother used to say, "Jesus sees you, and if you are not good He will reject you from His Heart." On the eve of my first Communion, when the whole family knelt as usual before this picture, I promised our Saviour always to love Him, and begged Him to keep me ever in His

Heart. But, alas ! my passions soon mastered me. To my shame, as a warning to the young, I confess I became the victim of two frightful scourges, which ruin so many youths, namely, bad company and bad books. At twenty years of age I was the most debased and dissolute young man in our town ; for thirty years I continued heaping crime upon crime. I entered the army, and God knows the life I then led ! Being ashamed to acquaint my family with my whereabouts, I stayed there for a long time, but at length I was obliged to return. What was to become of me ? I wandered from town to town, seeking work, and was frequently forced to beg. Meanwhile I sank even deeper into infidelity, and wallowed in the filth of my ungoverned passions. Oh, I blush while writing these lines ! but may it be for the honour of Thy Divine Heart, O my Jesus ! Apparently quite by chance I found myself in the course of my wanderings at Paray-le-Monial ; it was a holiday in the town. Two thousand lights burnt in the windows ; triumphal arches were erected. An innumerable concourse of people crowded the streets, filling the air with the notes of that hymn which to this day re-echoes in my ears : "God the meek, God the Conqueror." In my surprise I asked a poor woman what all this meant.

““What!” she replied, “do you not know?
It is the great procession of——”

““What procession?”

““Why, in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.”

““The Heart of Jesus? Where is It? Can we
see It?”

““No, *we* cannot see It; but It once revealed
Itself to Blessed Margaret Mary, a nun of the
Visitation Convent of this town, and requested
her to spread Its cultus among men.”

““Where is this convent?” I asked, following at
the same time the direction in which the good
woman pointed.

‘All the scoffs and jeers against religious proces-
sions which I had formerly read in immoral papers
recurred to my mind, and with a smile on my lips
I looked at these people, who in a grave attitude,
and each wearing a cross on his breast, walked
in the procession; I felt strangely touched.

‘Passing near a group of young men, I was struck
by the words: “Mercy, O Lord, on all weak men
who offend Thee, knowing not what they do. May
the seal of Christ, which was once impressed on
their foreheads, reappear in indelible characters.”

‘Upon arriving at the Visitation Convent, I
wished to enter the chapel, but was prevented by
the crowd which was already filling every nook
and corner. With the intention of waiting until

the crowd had dispersed, I looked about me, without being able to say what I was thinking of. Two large boards covered with linen, and bearing an inscription, attracted my attention. "Promises of our Saviour Jesus Christ to Blessed Margaret Mary." They were but as empty words to me, and especially those three, "Mercy," "Grace," "Perfection," were quite meaningless. One sentence, however, made an impression on me; "I will give to priests the power of moving the hardest hearts." My godlessness came vividly before my mind.

"To move the hardest hearts," I repeated. "Then I will prove it; trying will do me no harm. I will take them at their word, and at once ask to speak to a priest, for no word of his could possibly touch a heart like mine," I thought, with a bitter smile.

At that moment a nun passed by. Turning to her, I said abruptly:

"I wish to speak to a priest—a priest of Paray-le-Monial."

She led me into a room, upon whose whitewashed walls were black inscriptions, to which I paid no attention. I had found my motto, and meant to use it as an unconquerable weapon against the pilgrims of the whole world and laughing I repeated:

“ “ I will give to priests the power of touching the hardest hearts.”

‘ Soon a priest entered. For some seconds we stood silently facing each other, he expecting me to speak, I with a look of scorn and contempt depicted on my countenance. Suddenly I shuddered; the priest noticed it and said:

“ “ Well, my friend ?”

“ “ Oh, you do not know me,” I answered; “ I am an unbeliever. I do not credit one word of all you say or write. Call me an excommunicated man—a heathen—whatever you please, but not your friend.”

‘ For a long time I spoke in this strain, while the sentence I had read rang in my ears, accompanied by the ironical question, “ What will he say to me ?”

‘ The Abbé had turned pale, but without evincing any displeasure on his face or in his manner, he asked me several questions, at which I only laughed. He remarked, but failed to understand the strange movement of my head, which meant to say, “ That is not it.” I had conquered, and was on the point of laughing aloud and telling him all, but still I hesitated. At last he said:

“ “ Have you still your mother with you ?”

‘ My God! what an effect that question produced in me. Heart of Jesus, here didst Thou await

me! I was touched; my tears flowed, and my whole body trembled.

“My mother—you speak of my mother? She is dead.”

‘Ah! I now saw the picture before which I used to pray with her when a boy. I then remembered the few lines she had written to me upon her death-bed, and which I, unhappy man, had scarcely heeded:

“My child, I write to you from my death-bed. The grief your conduct has caused me is killing me; but I do not curse you, for I have always hoped that the Sacred Heart will convert you.”

“Ah, my mother! Listen, sir, Whilst waiting to enter the chapel I read the words that ‘the Heart of Jesus would give to priests the grace of touching the hardest hearts.’ I came to hear what *you* would say, and then to make fun of you. I now feel you have converted me.”

The Abbé had fallen on his knees praying and weeping. I then entered the chapel and at once went to confession, and some days later received Holy Communion.

‘May this history of my conversion promote the honour due to Thy Sacred Heart, O Jesus! Priests, love the Sacred Heart, and you will save souls! Mothers, who weep over the errors of

your children, supplicate the Sacred Heart of Jesus on their behalf!'

42. *A Widow and the Sacred Heart of Jesus.*

In the spring of 1883, the frost having done great damage to the fruit, an honest widow and devout worshipper of the Sacred Heart made a Novena, and promised a publication in the *Messenger* if her prayers were heard and her orchard was preserved. Her prayer was granted, and the orchard yielded more fruit this year than in any preceding one. In the course of the summer her son fell dangerously ill. She desired that he should receive the last Sacraments, but the doctor declared there was plenty of time, as the illness was not of a serious nature. Upon hearing this, the young man refused to receive them. In her distress the pious mother had recourse to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Leaving her son's bedside, she went to her own room, and then, kneeling before a picture of the Sacred Heart, with many tears promised to make a Novena and to have a Mass said in Its honour, and also to have it published in the *Messenger* if her son consented to receive the Last Sacraments before his death. Thereupon she returned to the sick man, who immediately made known his desire to see

the priest. The good woman sent at once for him, and scarcely an hour and a half had elapsed ere her son was reconciled to his God. Moreover, the priest had not left the house more than ten minutes when the young man expired. Twice had the Sacred Heart answered the poor widow's prayers, proving once more that God is 'faithful who has promised,' and that one of His most consoling promises is, that He is the 'God of the widow and the orphan.'

F. O. G. P.

THE END.





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